



**CLASSIC HOLIDAYS  
FOR TWO TO BE WON**  
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IN SECTION TWO  
**THE FORTUNES OF FAME**  
Ken and Emma and the  
curse of the celebrity couple



## Blair jobs plan for 1m single parents

Leader takes on left  
over welfare reform

DONALD MACINTYRE  
Political Editor

Tony Blair will tomorrow turn the bitterly controversial political argument about single mothers on its head, by pledging a new Labour programme aimed at taking in lone parents off benefit and into work.

Labour believes the move - which Mr Blair will unveil in his speech to the party conference - is an important extension of his commitment to a "welfare into work" programme. Party strategists believe that it will be electorally popular, including among lone parents themselves.

The plan is closely modelled on the successful Australian Jobs Education and Training Programme which was launched by Paul Keating's Labour government.

Unpublished Department of Social Security research shows that 90 per cent of single parents would take paid work if

**Inside**

£1.4bn youth jobs package; Union warning;

Labour's wealth page 8

The 'New Pragmatists' at the heart of the party page 15

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They could.

The new plan, which reflects Mr Blair's commitment to an "active rather than passive welfare", will require the Benefits Agency to draw up employment- and child-care plans for lone parents with children over five, rather than merely continuing to pay them benefits such as income support. Australian experience suggests that the scheme would save money.

Only 40 per cent of British lone parents are in work - the third lowest level in the EU. A quarter of children have parents who are divorced.

The move will come as part of the unwrapping of a series of specific policy pledges this week in Brighton, starting today with Labour Treasury spokesman Gordon Brown's announcement of details of his £1.4m youth employment programme, to be financed by a windfall tax on the privatised utilities.

In addition to the plan to reintegrate lone parents into the labour market, the Labour leader will announce plans for

a £110m scheme to reduce primary class sizes. It will be financed by scrapping the assisted places scheme for state funded pupils to go to private schools.

Party strategists are optimistic that it will overshadow debate over a series of divisive issues, which threaten to dominate the conference.

The executive yesterday agreed to allow a short conference debate on the issue by agreeing to submit a short report on their decision to delegates tomorrow morning.

But in a move that may be challenged on the conference floor today, the conference organisers refused to accept 13 emergency motions demanding her immediate reinstatement.

In an interview with the *Guardian*, Mr Blair says that people like Ms Davies had a choice: "They've got to decide if they're going to help a Labour government or carry on in a narrow sectarian politics that has no popular resonance. If they stood on the *Labour Briefing* platform they'd get 500 votes. If they want to stand on my policies and my back, in order to get into power to cause trouble for a Labour government, I think we're entitled to say no to that."

The leadership's chances today of defeating a highly embarrassing motion demanding Labour commit itself to a minimum wage of £4.15 suddenly improved yesterday, when the Transport and General Workers' Union bowed to intense pressure behind the scenes and agreed not to support the call.

But the GMB general union last night was holding out in support of the motion, which cuts across Mr Blair's determined insistence that Labour cannot commit itself to a figure before the election and should instead leave it in a Low Pay Commission. If the Edinburgh Central Constituency, which proposed the motion, insists on pressing it to a vote, the result is likely to be close.

Aides to Mr Blair, who provoked anger within the party by sending his son, Euan, to an opposite school, are bracing themselves for a highly-charged debate over grant-maintained schools on Wednesday.



Future vision: John Prescott follows Tony Blair's direction yesterday at Brighton racecourse with Pauline Prescott (left), Gordon Brown and Cherie Blair

Photograph: John Voos

## How Labour could hand victory to Major

Ove thought should dominate this Labour conference. It's that John Major may well win the next election.

A lethal self-confidence is creeping through the party, a lazy conviction that the Conservatives are so loathed that the only thing left to fight about is the nature of Labour's first legislative programme for 19 years.

Are memories so short? Mr Major is not a man who is going to be beaten by default. He is a courageous and ruthless campaigner who is just beginning to benefit from the personal risk he took in confronting his right-wing critics, and whose party is now likely to look more united on Europe than for years. Nor can Labour assume that the British economy will forever canvass against the Tories, as it has been. However tight things are this year, tax cuts are coming, as macro-politics eventually overwhelms macro-economics.

Then there is the media. During Tony Blair's extraordinary first 18 months as leader he has been swept along on a bright hollow of newspaper adulation. To paraphrase *Hilary Belot*, the stocks are sold, the press is squared, the middle class is -



Andrew Marr

quite - prepared. Proprietors have been courted; the editors jostle for the attention of the coming regime.

But the media is fickle, impatient, and well paid. Many journalists are bored of building Mr Blair up, are ready for a new story and quietly keen to give him a kicking. If left-wing rebellion and a leader's speech that failed to live up to its billing in Brighton were followed by a better-than-expected Tory conference, the Blair bubble could crash into spume and confusion. I don't expect this, but we are at a moment in the political cycle when things can still slip either way. These conferences will help set national attitudes. By next year the big themes of the

looming election will already have been decided. So what does Labour need to do?

The easiest answer is that it has to remain disciplined. Despite worries about Mr Blair's lack of Socialist spirit, the party has exhibited remarkable self-control. The PLP is full of bitten tongues. Poisonous recriminations and jealousies in the shadow cabinet have been held in check.

But a key part of recently-agreed Tory strategy is to prise open Labour differences. Senior ministers are looking for populist policies on crime, welfare and education, deliberately moving to the right, in the hope that Mr Blair will be forced to follow, so pulling at the party's divisions until they become intolerable. Self-discipline is going to be easy to call for, but it's going to be progressively harder for Labour people to live with.

More important is the next stage in the development of Labour policy which, as it stands, is underwhelming in three essential areas - economics, political reform and the public services. Most attention will be on tax and spending, but this year the clamour for pre-election detail will be ignored. Promises

on the utilities' windfall tax, a back-to-work programme and spending priorities are the start of Labour's attempt to sound decisive, without frightening taxpayers. But they all sound more like good front-page stories than completed proposals. When it comes to the serious numbers, Gordon Brown's verbiage will be unlikely to be lifted for another year at least.

Political reform is the most obvious and doable task for a Blairite government. But here, too, there is a worrying amount of work still to do on the detail of Labour's new state. On the Scottish parliament, voting reform, the Bill of Rights and Westminster reform, we have

been left haphazard bones.

A Blair government which flunked political reform would go down in history as a failure.

But a Blair government which did nothing else would quickly lose the support of its core electorate. This brings us to the public services, where Labour is grappling with nothing less than the need for a new settlement between public and private services. Most attention will be on tax and spending, but this year the clamour for pre-election detail will be ignored. Promises

here the propaganda, at least, is easy. Ministers who are appalled by the greed of privatised utility bosses, but unable to do anything about it, make easy targets. In education, the Tory battle-cry of choice merely infuriates parents who have it any. Even the Tory right is well aware of the isolated bureaucracy of the NHS Internal market. Railway privatisation, unless it is sabotaged by Opposition hostility, looks set to be the worst domestic error of Mr Major's period as Prime Minister.

After years of administrative Maoism under the Tories, Labour conservatism seems attractive; the provision of public services might be an unglamorous affair. But here too, some of the essential detail of Labour policy slips through one's fingers. John Major still banks.

Only Labour can give Britain the leadership it needs.

Join us today.



### INDEPENDENT Reporters take top awards

Two *Independent* journalists have won prestigious awards. Stephen Ward, Legal Affairs Correspondent, has been named Newspaper Journalist of the Year by the Bar Council and Andrew Brown, Religious Affairs Correspondent, has won the Templeton Prize for European Religious Journalism.

Peter Goldsmith QC, chairman of the Bar Council, said Ward demonstrated an "outstanding contribution to the reporting of legal issues". Brown won his prize in competition with journalists from 13 European countries.

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Labour

## Howard wants a British 'Alcatraz'

HEATHER MILLS  
Home Affairs Correspondent

Michael Howard is seeking private finance to build the first "Alcatraz"-style fortress super jail for the country's 260 most dangerous criminals.

The move is designed to head off stinging criticism in an unpublished inquiry report into

jail security. The *Independent* has learnt that the inquiry into prison security - following the IRA escape at Whitemoor and the subsequent Parkhurst debacle late last year - will be highly critical of the present system of holding high-risk, sophisticated and psychopathic criminals in prisons directed around the system.

The conclusions of the inquiry by Sir John Learmonth, the former Quartermaster General, due to be published later this month, suggest the most cost-effective way of ensuring public safety is the provision of one

or two American-style supersecure prisons. But aware of the controversy surrounding private prisons and lapses of security, the Home Secretary intends the super maximum "supermax" jail to be state-run.

Officials are confident the Cabinet would approve plans for the jail to be built by the private sector but their main concern is bad publicity. Home Office documents, seen by the *Independent*, say: "Announcing private sector involvement in this prison... may attract negative tabloid interest (Group 4 to run UK Alcatraz', etc)." This is a clear reference

to the security firm Group 4's embarrassing loss of prisoners in its disastrous first few weeks of prison escort work.

The papers reveal that Mr Howard has all but failed to secure public funding for a hi-tech super-jail. Officials are urgently seeking approval for private finance so that, when Sir John's report is published, the Home Secretary can announce that plans are underway. There are no plans to house women or young offenders in the supermax.

Creating a supermax prison would end a 30-year-old policy of moving convicted violent

and control-risk prisoners regularly between six jails - Parkhurst, Whitemoor, Full Sutton, Long Lartin, Frankland and Belmarsh.

Harry Fletcher, assistant general secretary of the National Association of Probation Officers said last night: "The debate has been going on for 30 years and during that time the case for the supermax has not been proved. The main advantage of high security is far outweighed by the difficulties for family visits, the stigmatisation and the high running and building costs."

Prison of the future, page 3

### COMMENT

Rupert Cornwell: Could the OJ trial pave the way for a black president?

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James Fenton: New Statesman's troubles. Page 17

Stephen Baxter charts travelling through time in fact and fiction. Page 17

Ruth Dudley Edwards: Judges go clubbing. Page 15

Another View: Angus Deayton says the Chancellor should not cut overseas aid. Page 16

Leading article: "If Mr Blair fails to prepare the ground on Europe, he could find himself as powerless in 1998 as Mr Major is today, faced by an unruly party and an electorate starved of informed debate." Page 16

Weather: There will be some sunshine and blustery winds. Scotland and Northern Ireland will start the day with showers that will move south and east. Section Two, page 25

Eric Cantona (right) marked his return to football after an eight-month suspension by setting up the first goal and scoring the second in Manchester United's 2-2 home draw with Liverpool. Page 23

**Hat-trick for Lammtara**  
Lammtara, (right) ridden by Frankie Dettori, became one of racing's great horses by matching Mill Reef's feat of winning the Derby, King George and Arc de Triomphe in a season. Page 23

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حکیم من الاحمد

news

# Papal envoy to investigate Irish church scandals

ALAN MURDOCH  
Dublin

A special papal envoy has been sent to investigate the unprecedented spate of clerical sex abuse and other scandals that threaten to undermine the moral authority of the Catholic Church in Ireland.

The envoy arrived in Ireland as a new survey of public attitudes revealed a rapid decline in public confidence. The poll, for the Institute of Advertising in Ireland, found that 75 per cent of people now have "mixed, little, or no confidence" in church leaders.

This represents a 17 per cent fall in confidence compared with a similar poll four years ago. Just 25 per cent expressed confidence compared with 42 per cent in 1991. The survey research was carried out in April before the latest scandals broke.

Cardinal Cahal Daly, Catholic Primate of All Ireland, last night offered "the most abject and most humble apology" to victims of abuse - and spoke of the church's atonement, penance and humility.

The Cardinal highlighted "wave after wave of scandal, crashing and breaking against the Church" in an address at Letterkenny, Co Donegal.

"When stories or allegations of abuse by some clerics come to attention, we must not be afraid of the truth."

"Truth can hurt, but it can also heal. It can give some measure of healing to victims, for whom long silence has been paralysing; even to abusers, whose lives have been accompanied by the long shadow of a guilty secret," he said.

The Vatican envoy, Archbishop Jorge Mejia, an experienced church troubleshooter, yesterday met Cardinal Daly. He is to report back to Pope John Paul on the state of clerical sex abuse claims and prosecutions, and is also expected to inquire into other highly publicised setbacks for the Church involving the conduct of some of its most senior prelates.

Last week, the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Desmond Connell, a noted pro-Vatican conservative, was shown to have made conflicting statements on whether the Church paid money towards compensating clerical sex abuse victims.

A Dublin newspaper yesterday claimed that the Church sought a verbal commitment to silence from a former altar boy paid £27,500 (£28,000) in an out-of-court settlement in 1993. The payment arose from a se-

ries of alleged sex assaults by a north Dublin curate between 1977 and 1980, now being investigated by police.

It emerged the curate had earlier been chaplain at a Dublin children's hospital.

Church sources have also admitted that a senior bishop took a series of expensive holidays in Thailand. It has been claimed Bishop Brendan Comiskey was detained in police cells in Bangkok after arriving there last October drunk and without a passport.

Gardai say the bishop declined to assist inquiries into sex abuse in his diocese. He is currently undergoing treatment for alcoholism in the US. Bishop Comiskey was recently summoned to Rome to explain his demands for a public debate on the policy of priestly celibacy.

Since 1993, a series of priests have been jailed for sex offences. In recent months priests from Wexford, in the south-east, to Londonderry in the north-west have appeared in court facing sex abuse charges.

On Saturday it emerged that gardai are investigating claims that more than a dozen former pupils at St Joseph's reform school and orphanage in Lower Salthill, Galway, were sexually and physically abused by three members of the Catholic Christian Brothers order. Similar inquiries have been taking place at nine other childcare centres around the country.

Last week, the former housekeeper of a prominent Dublin Catholic priest and broadcaster, Father Michael Cleary, publicly a staunch pro-Vatican moral conservative, confirmed he had fathered two sons with her. Phyllis Hamilton said soon after the birth of her first son, she returned home to find the priest in bed with another unmarried mother, to whom he was giving counselling.

Conduct unbecoming: Father Cleary (left) and Bishop Comiskey



Conduct unbecoming: Father Cleary (left) and Bishop Comiskey

# Final curtain falls for Ken and Em

MARY BRAID

The actress Emma Thompson finished her lines yesterday as she confirmed, after months of rumour, that the final curtain had come down on the glittering and, for some, irritating, Ken and Em show.

Ms Thompson, 35, always said marriage was a huge risk but the self-confessed optimist hoped that her union with fellow actor and director Kenneth Branagh, 34 - one of the most successful partnerships in the history of British film and theatre - would run and run.

As she stood dishevelled before an army of photographers at her west London home - hours after a Sunday tabloid headlined her alleged relationship with actor and recent costar Greg Wise - she played tired and emotional for real.

Asked to repeat an earlier statement on the end of the six-year run, Ms Thompson managed: "I think it said 'due to the pressures of work...' before trailing off. She said she could not string a sentence together, and refused to comment on her relationship with Mr Wise, 29, who stars with her in *Sense and Sensibility*, the film of the Jane Austen novel for which she wrote the screenplay.

Friends claimed that the marriage had been over for months, and blamed the pressure of work. Branagh had joked that he had to make an appointment to see her and that she went to bed with her Oscar. She had said she wanted children but that Ken was so tired "all his sperm are on crutches". For those who revelled in the on- and off-screen love affair the news was a tragedy of Shakespearean proportions. But Ms Thompson has admitted she was well aware that the partnership's apparent combination of off-screen domestic bliss and golden commercial success was too rich for some. It is claimed that the couple spent fewer than 100 days together at this London home. In a statement issued on Saturday night they said they had decided with great sadness to separate but that the split was entirely amicable. "Our work has inevitably led to our spending long periods of time away from each other, and, as a result, we have drifted apart."

**Great sadness:** Emma Thompson yesterday at the home she shared with Kenneth Branagh

Section Two, Cover Story



# Identity card gets blanket rejection by councils

NICHOLAS TIMMINS  
Public Policy Editor

Local government has come out in blanket opposition to a national identity card, whether compulsory or voluntary, telling Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, that it is opposed in both principle and practice.

The joint attack from the three main local authority associations, covering counties, districts and the metropolitan

authorities, comes as doubts are growing over Mr Howard's ability to get even the weakest version of a voluntary scheme through the Commons in the face of opposition from backbench Tories. Mr Howard is expected to back a voluntary scheme based on the new photo driving licence at the Conservative Party conference next week.

The stance by the local government associations - all

Labour controlled - is, however, decidedly more hostile than that of Labour's front bench, which has admitted a role for voluntary cards in some circumstances.

In their formal response to Mr Howard's Green Paper, the councils say they oppose a scheme, whether compulsory or voluntary, because they believe it "would be detrimental to the rights of individual citizens".

Police, they say, "relics on

public co-operation". "Giving the police powers to stop people and ask them to prove their identity is a major intrusion on the rights of the citizen and is bound to heighten tension between the police and certain sections of the community" - particularly young people and the ethnic minorities, who could find themselves asked to prove their identity more than the average.

If a voluntary scheme were

introduced, "there would be substantial social pressure to carry a card. In effect, a voluntary scheme would lead to a de facto compulsory one very quickly."

Smart cards would allow information to be stored which was unavailable to the person carrying it. And that "could enable state agencies to exchange information which is inappropriate, inaccurate and incapable of being checked."

The associations do not oppose a photographic driving licence which would contain "a strictly limited amount of information for a specific purpose". Beyond that, they resist.

Smart cards would allow information to be stored which was unavailable to the person carrying it. And that "could enable state agencies to exchange information which is inappropriate, inaccurate and incapable of being checked."

Right-wing Conservatives have warned that identity cards have "very serious implications for the traditional liberties of the British people".

Meanwhile, a recent Harris poll among MPs found that 18 per cent of Conservatives - more than enough to halt the legislation if the Opposition voted against - were opposed even to a voluntary scheme based on the new photo driving licence.

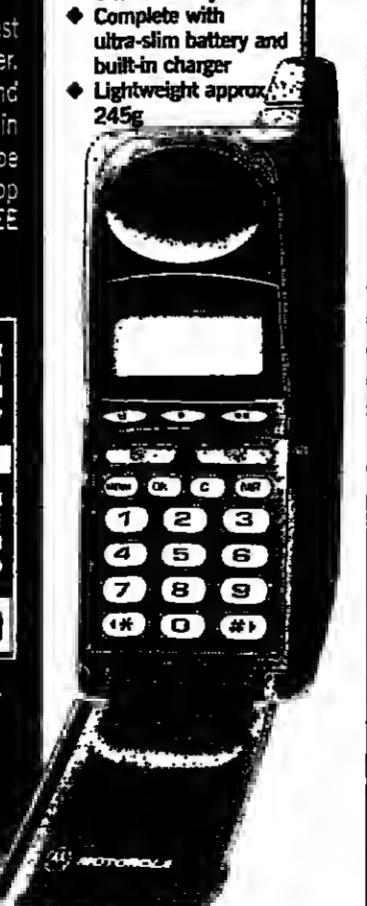
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## Pools giant joins scratchcard war

A new scratchcard war begins today as the pools giant Littlewoods has backed the National Lottery by launching its own scratchcard games to raise money for charity.

Three different Littlewoods scratchcard games will operate in each of seven British regions, with every game offering a total of a million tickets. Voluntary organisations will benefit by up to £240,000 from each game, 24p from each ticket sold, and each game will be dedicated to a particular charity. The new cards will be on sale alongside lottery scratchcards in shops, post offices and petrol stations.

The cards offer a maximum prize of £50,000 and Littlewoods hopes to make up to 3p profit from every ticket sold. "Our scratchcards are a simple and fast way for charities to benefit from people who simply want to have a flutter," said Littlewoods' marketing director

Tony Hillyer. "This is the first game in which players know they can directly help someone else." Littlewoods hopes to start handing funds over to charities early in the New Year.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations welcomed the idea but doubted whether it would bring in "new" money. "Giving 24p to charity is good - that's more than the lottery scratchcards - I like the idea of named charities," said its chief executive Stuart Etherington. He added that the "scratchcard wars" were probably just moving the money around, and that the best way to help was still to give direct.

Littlewoods has complained about "unfair" competition from the lottery and, in August, announced that it was shedding 520 jobs from its 3,400 workforce as a result of the lottery's success in attracting punters away from the pools.

The old hostilities between the loyalists and the republicans broke out yesterday in Glasgow, when loyalists pelted Sinn Féin supporters with bottles outside

## Unionist leader calls for concessions by Dublin

COLIN BROWN  
Chief Political Correspondent

David Trimble, the new leader of the Ulster Unionists, will today visit Dublin and urge John Bruton, the Taoiseach, to take Ireland back into the Commonwealth to create a single currency by merging the pound with the Irish Republic's constitutional claim to the North.

"We hear a lot about the concessions needed by the British government to break the impasse, but so far the Irish government has done nothing," said a senior Ulster Unionist source. "We think they should return to the Commonwealth of nations, just as South Africa did."

The old hostilities between the loyalists and the republicans broke out yesterday in Glasgow, when loyalists pelted Sinn Féin supporters with bottles outside

a rally by Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin president. Five people were arrested for fighting.

Mr Adams renewed his demands for the British government to drop its requirement for the IRA to make progress on decommissioning arms before Sinn Féin is allowed into all-party talks with the Ulster Unionists. He said: "A total demilitarisation of the situation is an objective of the peace process. It is achievable. What we have is an achievable objective being turned into an obstacle."

There has been urgent diplomatic action in Washington to seek a way through the impasse to all-party talks before President Bill Clinton visits Britain and Ireland at the end of the month. John Hume, the SDLP leader, yesterday called on London to set a date for the talks to begin but no moves are expected before the end of next week's Tory conference.

The Ulster Unionist leaders remain convinced that there will be no return to violence in spite of the warnings by Mr Adams and the statement by the IRA before the Sinn Féin delegates' conference in Dublin at the weekend.

"I still think most people in the IRA recognise that the conclusion they reached in 1994 that there must be a ceasefire was because they cannot win," said John Taylor, the deputy leader of Ulster Unionists.

"They weren't beaten, which is why there is no question of any surrender. But they recognise that if they start fighting again - and some want to - they still cannot win."

It will be the first time that an Ulster Unionist leader has visited the Government's buildings in Dublin. Mr Trimble will have lunch with Mr Bruton after launching an Ulster Unionist book.

## Astronomers say time travel is just science fiction

TOM WILKIE  
Science Editor

Astronomers are concerned that the public is getting *Star Trek*-style science fiction dressed up as science fact, following reports that Professor Stephen Hawking believed that travelling in time is possible.

Dr Simon Mitton, an astronomer at Cambridge University, said: "It has been known for the past 20 years that if you can come up with a mechanism for severely distorting spacetime and creating a 'wormhole', then it would be possible at the

level of equations for single particles to travel from the present into the past."

But he added: "It worries me that in describing circumstances in which time-travel and faster-than-light travel would be that one could also travel back in time."

Professor Hawking, Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, said: "There is a two-way trade between science fiction and science. We may not yet be able to boldly go where no man or woman has gone before, but at least we can do it in the mind."

He emphasised that while he believed time-travel was theo-

retically possible, it would probably never be practically possible.

The first "proof" that Einstein's theory of general relativity allowed time travel was published by the mathematical logician Kurt Gödel in 1949. He derived from the theory a cosmological model of a rotating universe in which journeys backwards in time were possible.

However, Gödel's model universe bears no resemblance to the one we inhabit. In 1988, stimulated by Carl Sagan's 1985 science fiction novel *Contact*, the US cosmologist Kip Thorne and two of his colleagues examined the idea of quantum-mechanical wormholes in space as time-tunnels into the past.

Professor Thorne discussed the idea extensively in the last chapter of his book *Black Holes and Time Warps: Einstein's Outrageous Legacy*, published last year. He concluded: "We can't know for sure until physicists have fathomed the depth of the laws of quantum gravity."

For the moment, time machines have still not got further than the pages of H.G. Wells.

Building a *TARDIS*, page 17

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مكتبة من الأجل

# Internet set to cut phone bills

DAVID PITCHFORD

A controversial new telephone system, which carries long-distance signals across the Internet, will cut the cost of international phone calls to certain levels, according to the company which has launched the service.

International Discount Telecommunications (IDT) said that its pioneering transatlantic service, costing about 8p a

minute, will be available in Britain by January, and a limited service will be available in 80 countries "in the coming months".

To access the service, customers will need an Internet connection, which costs around £12 a month, and a personal computer with modem, microphone and speaker. Unlike other Internet voice services, where the service is limited to computer-to-computer com-

munication, IDT's system allows for calls to regular telephones. The president of IDT, Howard Jonas, said: "Our system will bring international calling within the range of regular people."

The implications for users, and for the major phone companies, are far-reaching. British Telecom, which makes £2 billion a year from international calls, stands to lose custom from the one million British people with Internet access, a significant

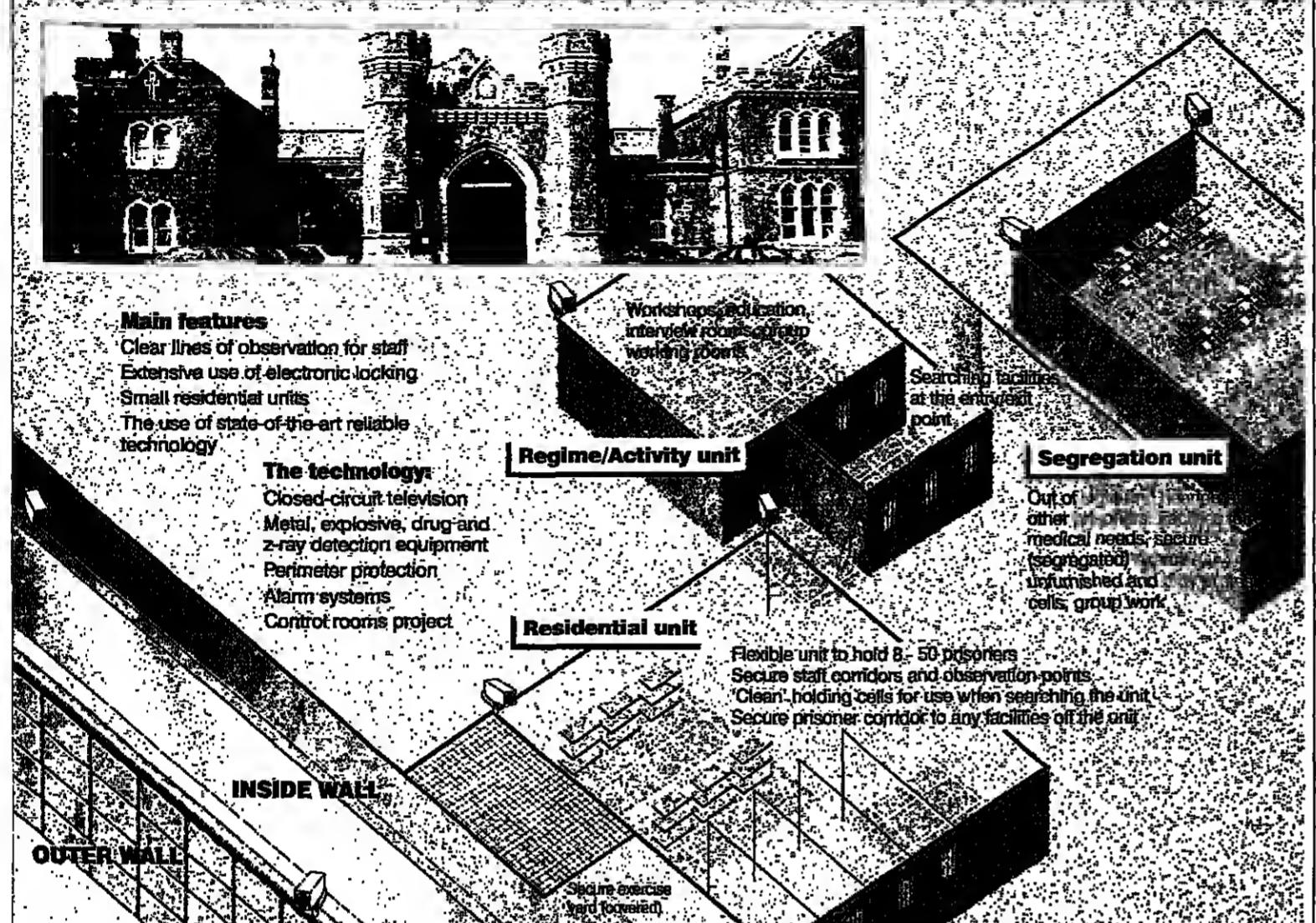
number of whom are business users. Neil Ellul, editor of *Internet magazine*, said: "The whole basis of the Internet is cheap and reliable communication. BT have had it too good for too long." But BT said they had no objections to the IDT system, "as long as they abide by the same regulations as us". Telecommunications watchdog OFTEL confirmed that the service "seemed legal", but added: "We are watching it closely."

Any restrictive legislation would take at least six months. IDT, whose undercutting "callback" phone services have irritated telephone companies and governments worldwide, claims its new service will revolutionise long-distance calls. However, a question mark hangs over the legal status of the service, as well as the amenability of companies which provide access to the Internet. Internet-provider companies are ambi-

valent about voice communications over the Internet as they take up large amounts of bandwidth, slowing down connections for other users.

Traditionally the Internet has grown to accommodate its users' needs and many believe that new technology will keep up with demands made on it.

The face of Britain's old prisons ... and the blueprint for the future



## Escapes inspire the 'supermax' jail

Ministers studied hi-tech American examples after service was blamed for creating a 'disaster waiting to happen'

HEATHER MILLS  
Home Affairs Correspondent

A series of increasingly dramatic escapes in recent years has led to proposals for a super-secure prison.

It started with the helicopter escape from Gartree prison in 1987, followed by the 1991 break-out of two IRA prisoners from Brixton jail and culminated with the Whitemoor and Parkhurst debacles at the end of last year.

Ministers first started looking at the feasibility of a supermax jail after Sir John Woodcock's scathing report into the Whitemoor escape, which blamed all levels of the prison service for creating a "disaster waiting to happen".

An American specialist from the US federal system was brought in to advise on security and senior Prison Service staff and Home Office ministers visited the new generation of hi-tech superjails in the US - including one in Minnesota, which while furnished with state-of-the-art security, appears to be built like a Saxon fort sunk into the landscape with the walls surrounded by artifical hills.

But facing initial Treasury resistance, the plans appeared to be on hold. However, the findings of Sir John Learmonth's inquiry into prison security set up in the wake of the Parkhurst and Whitemoor escapes have given them new impetus.

Documents seen by the *Independent* say that in the absence of public money, it is "crucial" that agreement is secured in principle to private finance. "Early agreement would allow the Home Secretary to accept this aspect of the expected Learmonth recommendations."

The two stumbling blocks officials foresee are ministers' initial resistance to agree to the plan until seeing both Learmonth's findings and the conclusions of a feasibility study - and bad publicity over private sector involvement. Given that both favour one or two "supermax" jails, officials are confident of securing ministers' approval "through careful wording of the Home Secretary's briefing". But they say "robust defensive lines of public sector involvement more generally must be available" to head off media criticism.

Although no sites are suggested, draft proposals seen by the *Independent* suggest the supermax jail will be broken down into small units to hold between 8 and 50 prisoners, each with extensive use of electronic locking and alarms and monitored by closed-circuit television linked to a control room.

Corridors will be similarly secured and each unit will contain "clean" holding cells for use when searching the unit. There will also be searching facilities at each entry and exit point.

Each unit is likely to have adaptable rooms to cater for whatever activities are in progress, from education to group therapy to work. All exercise yards will be covered by steel mesh to prevent the kind of helicopter escape that took place at Gartree.

Visitors and staff will have to pass through screens designed to detect metal, explosives or drugs. The proposals also suggest that delivery, storage and maintenance departments are all located outside the perimeter wall to make everything easier to search before it enters the prison.

The whole complex will be surrounded by a series of perimeter walls and fences,

each with a monitored and alarmed "sterile" area in between.

"Within the constraints of a secure environment the regime will be productive, developmental and prepare prisoners for their eventual release or reclassification," the proposals say.

Lord Williams of Mostyn, a prominent labour barrister, estimated that retraining judges would cost an extra £30m a year. But Lord Woolf said this was a relatively small expense when set against the savings involved. The Government is committed to making the reforms work, according to John Taylor, junior minister in the Lord Chancellor's department. However, he would not say if extra money would be spent on the courts.

## Drug tests 'denying patients full care'

NICHOLAS TIMMINS  
Public Policy Editor

Thousands of patients are being denied effective treatment due to unnecessary "placebo" treatments in trials intended to test new drugs, doctors have warned.

In particular, doctors have attacked the way trials for a new drug aimed at preventing vomiting after operations have been carried out.

In studies of whether the drug ondansetron worked, 8,806 patients had taken part in the trials by July 1994. But 2,620 of these were given placebos and denied existing anti-nausea drugs which "though not completely effective or without side effects" do bring some relief, according to Dr Rebecca Aspinall and Dr Neville Goodman, anaesthetists at Southmead Hospital in Bristol.

The doctors acknowledge that when new drugs are first produced, placebo trials are needed because it is known that any medical intervention can appear to benefit some patients. By testing the new drug against a placebo, doctors can be sure of its real effect - and not just the effect of patients being given at least some apparent "treatment".

Once it is known to work, however, new drugs should be tested against existing products to find out which works best, rather than having drug companies sponsor yet more trials which involve placebos - 18 in this case - in order to build up an apparent weight of evidence in the drug's favour.

In the case of ondansetron, "it is difficult not to conclude that this was an example of the industry failing to seek information that would allow true comparison against rival products", the doctors say in this week's *British Medical Journal*.

The doctors acknowledge that when new drugs are first produced, placebo trials are needed because it is known that any medical intervention can appear to benefit some pa-

## English language being led astray

JUDITH JUDD  
Education Editor

Shakespeare did it. School-leavers and university students do it. Now even princes, prime ministers and professors of English are breaking the rules of grammar. Even the Prince of Wales, does not always speak the Queen's English.

Their failings are highlighted today by Professor John Honey, former professor of education at Leicester Polytechnic and now professor of English at Osaka International University in Japan. Professor Honey, a long-standing critic of education standards in Britain and a champion of standard grammar, has spent 15 years noting the mistakes of the famous.

His main concern, elaborated in an article called "A new rule for the Queen and I" in the journal *English Today*, is the noun case.

He points out that, under existing rules, the noun changes if it is the object rather than the subject. For example, we say "my wife and I went" but "he dislikes my wife and me".

Though Dr Johnson was a



stickler for the correct use of the pronoun, Shakespeare, Thackeray, Dickens were not. Professor Honey wants the rules changed because so many well-known people are breaking them. He cites as examples:

□ Baroness Thatcher (Oxford graduate): "It is not for you and I sitting here to condemn..."

□ Sir Rhodes Boyson (Ex-headmaster and former education minister): "The Labour party have taken the Red Rose as their

emblem [but] I don't think they asked permission of we Lancastrians before they did it."

□ Professor Brian Cox (professor of English at Manchester University and chairman of a government working party on English): "Philip Larkin expressed nervousness about allying himself to we jacked-booted characters."

□ The case of the Prince of Wales is more complicated. In an interview with the BBC last

year when asked if he had been faithful to his wife, he replied: "Yes, until it had become clear that it had irretrievably broken down, us both having tried."

Professor Cox said last week: "The view of all modern linguists is that the concept of correctness as absolute is foolish because our notions of correctness keep changing."

Peter Bassett, of the Queen's English Society, countered: "You would not find a single soul among our members who would support a change in the rules. Words still have a specific meaning. Unless people use them correctly there will come a time when we don't know what we mean."

Professor Honey suggests an alternative rule for optional use by academics, politicians, exam candidates and, of course, by you and me!



**Q History**  
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news

# Firm suspected of breaking Serb embargo

CHRIS BLACKHURST

Two executives from a company in Cyprus are being refused entry to Britain because officials fear the firm has been dealing with the Bosnian Serbs in defiance of a United Nations embargo.

The two work for East Point Holdings which has an office in Mayfair, central London, and is registered at Companies House. East Point is on the US Government hit-list of companies

suspected of busting sanctions which prohibit anything other than food or medical supplies reaching the Bosnian Serbs.

Chris Peacock of the Department of Public Affairs at the US Treasury in Washington, said East Point was on the federal warning list. "If someone is on the list, all transactions with them by US persons are prohibited and all their assets which come into the US jurisdiction are blocked," he said.

He added that a "very thorough" investigation, relying on information drawn from "all available agencies" had concluded the company had been trading with the Bosnian Serbs.

The US list is published mainly as a warning to banks not to make loans to such companies. No such list is available in this country and firms on the register are allowed to carry on trading freely. Only if Customs decide to investigate and a prosecution ensues, do they face any ban.

According to documents at Companies House in London, East Point describes itself as a "general trader" and has a turnover of \$300m (£190m) a year. On the register, its directors are listed as two Greek Cypriots based in Nicosia. The company recently took out a mortgage with the Cyprus Popular Bank to redevelop new UK premises in Chesterfield Street, Mayfair.

East Point owns 90 per cent of Yu Point, a Yugoslav company and 51 per cent of M Point in Hungary.

At their existing premises in Albermarle Street, Mayfair, East Point's UK staff are furious at the Foreign Office's refusal to grant their colleagues visas. They deny emphatically ever having themselves broken sanctions. In an eerily quiet office - the phones rang just once during the *Independent's* visit - they said their business was dealing in "agricultural machinery, metals and oil derivatives - crude oil". They knew they were working for a firm accused by the US of sanctions-breaking. "We can't understand what is going on; it is a problem we can't explain," said the UK manager. He and his two assistants refused to give their names, claiming it would "not be helpful."

While the directors are listed as Greek Cypriots, they admitted the real bosses were Muslims in act of provocation," they explained. Warning to their theme, they said there had been "atrocities on all sides

but we never hear of them". They refused to elaborate on what they are doing in London.

"We are just looking for markets, we have no real business here," said the manager. They would like their colleagues to be able to join them and want to move into the new building.

As for the UN blockade, he said, "we hope sanctions will go, so one day we can continue to work". Until then, they stressed, they will not be trading with the people back home.

## 'Living dead' up for grabs in Cottle's shop of horrors

WILL BENNETT

The Bride of Dracula smiled serenely at curious onlookers, the blood dripping from her mouth as she lay in her coffin under a sign which invited them to "view one of the living dead".

In her heyday, the animated figure was part of a ghost train ride looming out of the darkness to frighten ballyhooers. But youngsters today expect something more spectacular and it is a few years since she made any body scream.

Yesterday, the bride fetched £510 at one of the most extraordinary house clearance auctions ever held in Britain. Gerry Cottle, entrepreneur and former circus owner, had decided to empty his barn at his winter headquarters at Addlestone Moor, Surrey.

No one could ever accuse Mr Cottle, who has handed over the running of his circus to his three daughters, of being sentimental. As he viewed items he had collected over 25 years in circuses and fairgrounds, he said: "In the winter, we need to use this shed for servicing the vehicles and we don't have room for all this."

Buyers, some from the United States, Germany and the Netherlands, picked their way through the shed with the reverential awe of children let loose in a toyshop so wonderful that they barely knew where to start. About the only thing not for sale was a huge illuminated sign bearing the Cottle name.

Quadro and Lazar, otherwise known as Hughe and Christie O'Neill, from Woking, Surrey, were after an organ for



Last gasp: The Bride of Dracula looks out from her coffin as the bidding gets under way in Gerry Cottle's barn sale

Photograph: Edward Sykes

their magic shop and props for their stage illusions and comedy act.

Mr O'Neill said: "It is very unusual for this type of stuff to come on to the market, some of it is just irreplaceable. I am sur-

prised he is selling it." Paul White, an amateur enthusiast from Lingfield, Surrey, added: "It is the memorabilia in the auction that attracts me. But it is quite sad that it is being sold - it is a bit like being at some-

body's funeral." When bidding got under way, a two-headed calf, made by a taxidermist to shock circus-goers, fetched £210 and an eight-legged lamb, £200.

A small Thomas the Tank En-

gine ride went for £160, while fibreglass clown masks, from Butlin's holiday camps in the 1950s, sold for £60 to £100 each.

But a waxwork figure of Queen Victoria, which had

gazed sternly down on the proceedings from the platform by the auctioneer, failed to find a buyer. She looked so disapproving that even the most ardent enthusiasts were probably too frightened to bid.

But a small demonstration by a dozen members of the UK Independence Party outside a west London branch of Sainsbury's was the height of mass resistance. At the store's branch in Camden, where metric measurement has been phased in over three months, shoppers were largely unfazed by Day One of the new order. "Luvvie it easy," soothed an elderly lady at the meat fridger running her finger down one of store's large conversion posters. "No need for a fuss. Schoolchildren have been doing it for ages and I taught myself last week. You

have to move with the times."

Others were not even aware of this latest assault on the nation's pride. "Metri-what now?" asked the trader in the market down the road. "Exciting, innit?"

All over Britain news agencies tried to ferret out the disgruntled. Bristol anglers were furious to discover that the traditional pim of maggots might soon come in litres. For some bizarre reason, seaworms were given a reprieve until the year 2000.

Ian Macaulay, host at the Bell pub near Newbury, Berkshire, pledged that in his public house a pint of shandy would remain just that - despite the EC ruling that it was a soft drink and should therefore be measured in litres. The Bell, where money is still stored in a drawer, not a till, and the bar is no more than a hatch in the wall, is a shrine to those who would resist the march of time.

Grocer David Wood, the only supplier of petrol in the village of Little Marsham, Kent, sadly drew his last gallon from his 1946 pump, complaining that the EC directive was yet another nail in the small businesses' coffin. "It seems to me they just don't want the little people any more - it's all set up for the big shops."

For Bob Brown, on the vegetable stall at Camden market, the only relief was that he was unaffected for another five years. He would resist till the end - the only hope was a referendum.

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# Pioneering trial to recycle TV sets and kettles

CHARLES ARTHUR  
Technology Correspondent

Unwanted toasters, kettles, televisions and other domestic appliances will be recycled in an ambitious scheme starting today among 10,000 homes in West Sussex.

The 12-month trial in Worthing and Midhurst is the first of its kind in Europe, and will try to find out how much valuable material can be recovered from products that would normally be thrown on to waste tips.

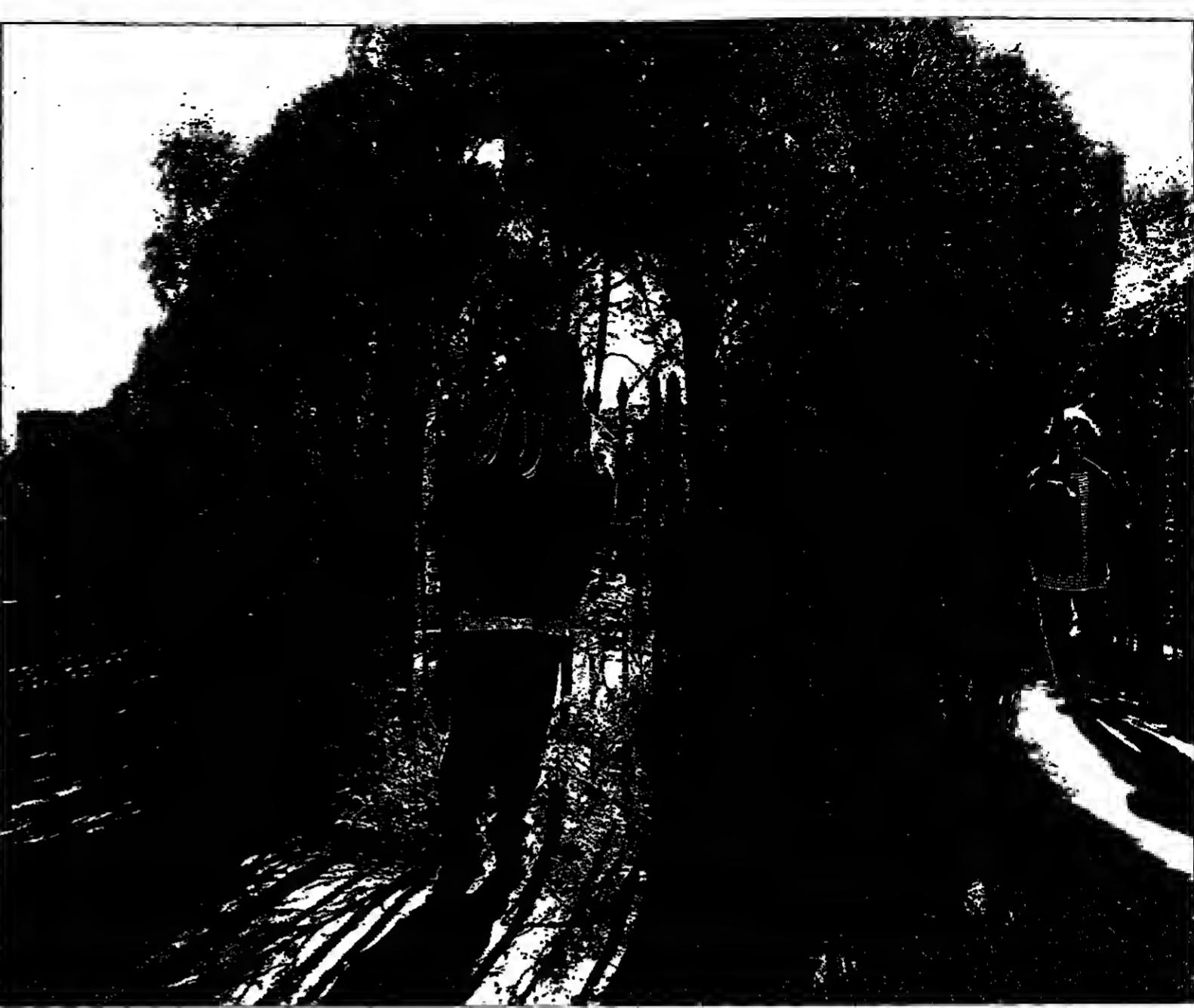
If it proves profitable, the scheme could be extended to recycle materials from a number of areas. Industry estimates suggest 500,000 tons of electrical and electronic equipment are thrown away every year, equivalent to about 27 kilograms of waste from each household.

Unwanted appliances can contain valuable products, such as aluminium, gold and silver (in electrical contacts), iron and steel, as well as plastics that can be recycled for use in other

products. The study, funded by the Industry Council for Electronic and Electrical equipment Recycling (ICER), will investigate whether it is economic to recover them. Paper recycling projects, for example, have often proved unprofitable because of the varying cost of paper.

People in Worthing and Midhurst will be asked to take gadgets – "anything with a plug or battery" – to a disposal site. Refrigerators will be treated separately because they contain CFCs, which cannot be released into the atmosphere.

A weekly collection will take the remaining items to four recycling companies. The service will be free. "There is a similar scheme running in some German districts, but people have to pay for it," said Claire Snow, director of the industry body ICER which is sponsoring the trial. "That means people don't use the service as much as they could." The German scheme concentrates on retrieving gold and silver from the electrical



New leaves: Visitors exploring the thinning Hampton Court maze in south-west London, which is soon to be replanted. Photograph: David Sandison

## Comeback for corncrake

NICHOLAS SCHOON  
Environment Correspondent

One of Britain's most endangered birds, the corncrake, shows signs of coming back from the brink. For two years running its numbers have increased in the Hebridean islands and Orkney where it has made its last stand.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds estimates that the number of calling males has risen from 480 to 570 over the past two years.

The corncrake, a relative of the moorhen which winters in south-east Africa, was a common farmland bird before the Second World War.

Many older people can still remember its rasping call. It has been a victim of the modernisation

of farming, which has denied it the tall grass it needs through spring and most of summer.

It had held out in Northern Ireland as well as in the Scottish islands but the last time it bred in Ulster was in 1993. Numbers have risen recently in the Irish Republic, however.

RSPB experiments on the Hebridean island of Coll have shown that the timing and method of hay cutting are crucial for the survival of the corncrake nestlings in crofters' fields.

For the past four years it has joined with the Scottish Crofters' Union and the Government in running a scheme which pays crofters not to cut hay or silage until after 31 July.

To get the money, the crofters also have to mow in a way which reduces the risk of the young birds fleeing into the path of the mower. The scheme cost £300,000 to run this year.

Stuart Housden of the RSPB said: "We have a real chance of halting the slide towards extinction."

He urged all farmers on land with corncrake potential to take up the payments.

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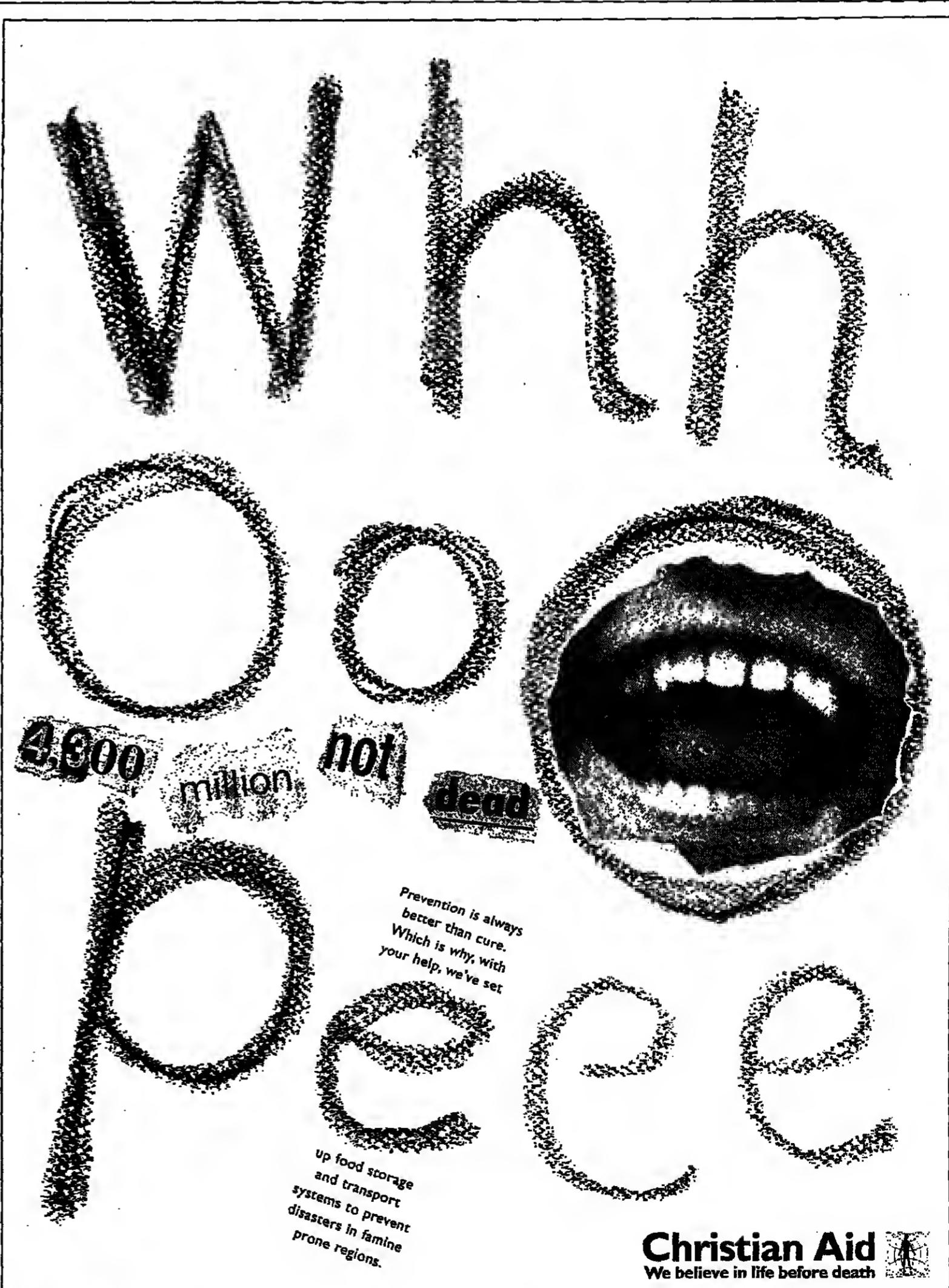
Name of Account	Minimum Balance	Gross Interest Rate*	Net Interest Rate**
Instant Reserve	1	1.00	0.75
Under 16s receive	500	3.50	2.62
£500 rate for £1 to £500	2,500	3.65	2.73
	5,000	3.85	2.88
	10,000	4.25	3.18
	25,000	4.60	3.45
Private Reserve	500	4.00	3.00
Annual Interest	5,000	4.20	3.15
	10,000	4.95	3.71
	25,000	5.45	4.08
	50,000	5.75	4.31
	100,000	5.85	4.38
Private Reserve	500	3.93	2.94
Monthly Income	5,000	4.13	3.09
	10,000	4.85	3.63
	25,000	5.32	3.99
	50,000	5.61	4.20
	100,000	5.70	4.27
Investment Reserve	5,000	5.50	4.12
Annual Interest	10,000	6.00	4.50
	25,000	6.30	4.72
	50,000	6.50	4.87
	100,000	6.75	5.06
Investment Reserve	5,000	5.43	4.07
Monthly Income†	10,000	5.91	4.43
	25,000	6.20	4.65
	50,000	6.39	4.79
	100,000	6.63	4.97
TESSA***	1	6.00	N/A
Annual Interest	Max Investment	6.50	N/A
TESSA***	1	5.85	N/A
Monthly Income			
M.A.X.	1	1.00	0.75
Treasurer's Reserve	1	1.75	1.31
	500	3.70	2.77
	5,000	3.95	2.96
	10,000	4.70	3.52
	25,000	5.20	3.90

\*The gross interest rate shown is the new rate without taking account of the deduction of income tax. \*\*The net interest rate shown represents the gross interest rate after the deduction of income tax at the basic rate (currently 23%). \*\*\*However, in TESSA accounts a deduction is made from gross rate provided the TESSA conditions are met. Gross interest rates used by Investment Reserve include 1.5% gross rate interest payable on 1 June each year for the next 12 months for each month income option provided that withdrawal conditions are met and balance remains over £5,000.

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## news

# Hospital funding stokes NHS controversy

**COLIN BROWN**  
Chief Political Correspondent

The go-ahead is to be given for four privately financed NHS hospitals by the Secretary of State for Health, Stephen Dorrell, in a move that is certain to cause a fresh controversy over the future of the health service.

Stonehaven in Scotland will be followed by a new £100m hospital for the NHS covering Norwich and Norfolk. Private sector building firms will also put up the money for hospital units costing millions of pounds in Bishop Auckland, Swindon and Marlborough, and North Durham.

Under the plans, the NHS will run the hospitals for NHS patients, but the buildings will be owned by the private construction companies on NHS land. Nick Brown, shadow health minister, said he had evidence in leaked papers that the private contracts could be limited to nine years, raising doubts about the NHS retaining use of the buildings in the long term.

Ministerial sources were anxious to deny that it was a step

towards the privatisation of the NHS. But Labour is hostile to the plans. The Treasury has relaxed its rules to allow the hospitals to be built, providing that the private sector accepts the risk for the building.

The NHS will increasingly rely on the private finance initiative for capital spending, as the Treasury imposes a moratorium on capital projects to cut public expenditure. Over the last 10 years, there were 10 contracts for NHS hospitals for over £25m, but there are 25 schemes for that amount by the private sector in the pipeline.

Mr Dorrell will challenge Labour to accept privately financed projects in a series of speeches, which will seek to exploit alleged differences of view between Mr Blair and Margaret Beckett, his shadow Secretary of State for Health, over whether Labour should allow private finance in the NHS.

Whitehall sources say Mr Dorrell is also considering relaxing the guidelines on the internal market in the NHS to allow more freedom of competition between hospitals for

business from GP fundholders. His strategy is likely to alarm Tory grass-roots supporters who have tabled motions for the party conference next month calling for the closure of Bart's and other hospitals to be halted. There are also calls for a slowdown to the changes. Vauxhall Tories urged the Government to recognise "there needs to be a time of adjustment for all".

The moves risk raising fears that the Government is embarking on a privatisation programme for the NHS, which ministers deny. Mr Dorrell will tell the conference in a debate on health that the private finance initiative will boost the NHS and could double the building of hospitals costing over £25m for NHS patients.

He rejected the advice to the Prime Minister by a former deputy chairman of the party, John Maples, in a leaked memorandum, that the Government should aim to keep health out of the headlines. He is determined to take a high profile, but to do more to reassure the voters that the Government is improving the health service.



Old ways: A nurse, Elizabeth Smith, with a patient at Arduithie hospital, Grampian

## Cottage care in the past as profit forms the future

Scotland used as test-bed for radical medical project. John Arlidge reports

The Government is to use Scotland as a test-bed for its most radical private finance project - the creation of Britain's first private NHS hospital, where all patients will be treated by medical staff working for profit-making firms.

Scottish Office ministers are urging the private sector to build, equip and run a new public hospital in Stonehaven, a fishing town near Aberdeen. More than five companies have already offered to fund the £2.5m centre, which will provide a wide range of services, including casualty, for up to 20,000 local people.

The initiative, which is backed by Grampian health board, the local health authority, has provoked a political storm. Labour, health unions and the British Medical Association say it marks the first, decisive step towards NHS privatisation.

Under the scheme, private investors will build and equip the new hospital, which will replace Stonehaven's two ageing "cottage" health centres - the Arduithie and the Woodcott. GPs will provide the in-house medical care but the health board will ask private firms to bid for the £2.5m annual contract to supply all clinical and ancillary services, including nursing.

Although Grampian Healthcare Trust, the local NHS provider, is also expected to submit a tender, observers say that, with ministerial support, a private company is set to win.

Firms will make their bids next month and health managers will announce the winner early next year. Because it is an NHS contract, treatment will continue to be free.

Health authority officials are turning to the private sector because they argue it can act faster than the cash-starved NHS. Frank Hartnett, general manager of Grampian health board, said: "With Treasury constraints on spending, the public sector cannot fund this project now. But top-quality private companies want to invest here right away. By using these firms, we can get an NHS hospital quickly and at no extra cost to the public."

Scottish Office officials, who are the driving force behind the initiative, agree. They argue that if the private sector builds and runs the new hospital, more public money will be available for other NHS projects.



Frank Hartnett: 'standards will be among the highest'

But doctors' leaders and opposition MPs bitterly oppose the plan. They insist it threatens to destroy the NHS. Dr Sandy Macara, chairman of the British Medical Association, argues

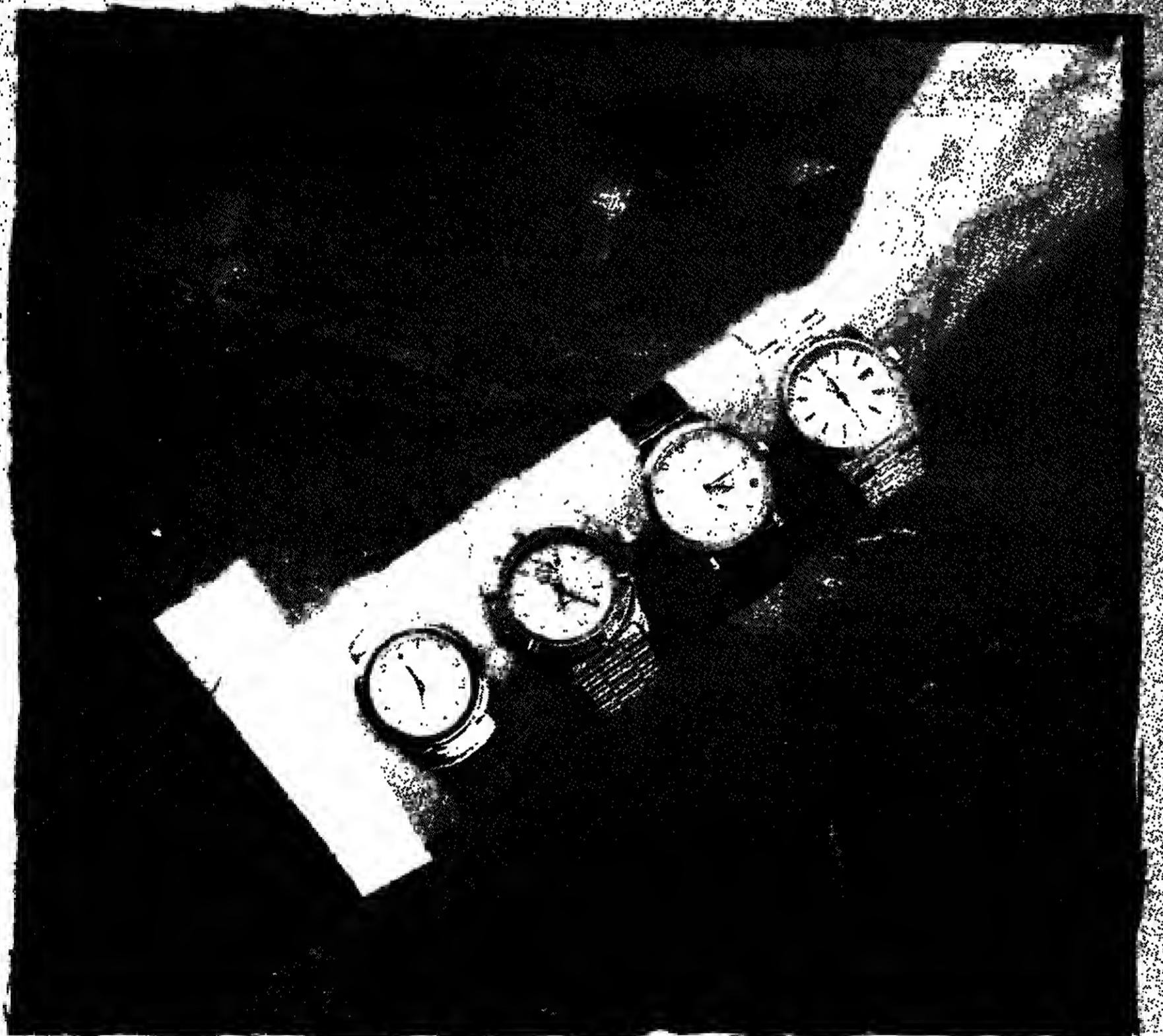
that "the very essence of the NHS" is at stake in Stonehaven. "Never before has an entire NHS clinical services contract been offered to the private sector. If a private company wins this contract, it will mark the end of the centrally planned and resourced health service - which has provided cheap, high-quality care across Britain for 50 years - and the beginning of a fragmented, privatised and ultimately more expensive service. That would be an unprecedented act of vandalism."

The proposals also worry local medical staff at Arduithie and Woodcott. They are concerned that a private company will bring in new employees or try to force down the wages of existing workers to increase profits. They also question how the health board will guarantee existing standards of care.

Mr Hartnett insists standards will be "among the highest" in Britain. "As a test case, this will be the most closely scrutinised hospital in the country." And he rejects claims that the scheme heralds the privatisation of the NHS. "This hospital will be part of the NHS and treatment will continue to be free. The only difference is that staff will not be public sector employees."

Whoever wins the contract, the Government wants to conclude the process by next April so that the hospital can open before the next election and ministers can use it to bolster the case for private-public sector partnerships in the health service.

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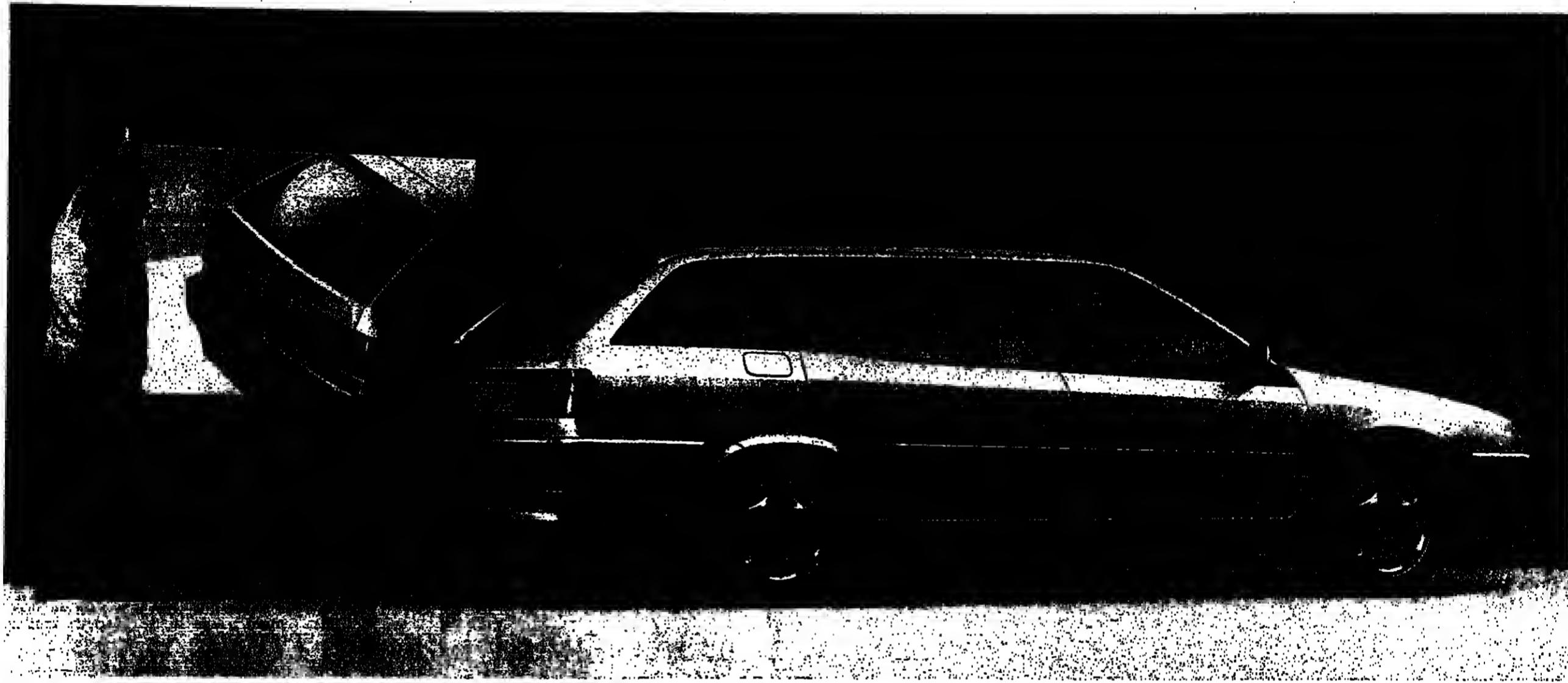
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## LABOUR IN BRIGSTON

# Brown to unveil £1.4bn youth jobs package

PATRICIA WYNNE DAVIES  
Political Correspondent

Labour will today make a firm commitment to earmark £1.4bn for young job creation and training, while setting its face against shopping lists of "irresponsible" spending commitments.

Disclosing a four-pronged package of measures for the under-25s on the conference's opening day, Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, will tell delegates that the "fate of this generation of Thatcher's children - now Major's young unemployed - is a human tragedy on a colossal scale that affects millions of families. Our objective is nothing less than the abolition of youth unemployment."

The package to help 620,000 unemployed people aged 18-24 will form a manifesto commitment at the next general election. Cash from the one-off "windfall tax" on the private utilities would be used to help the "forgotten generation" of

jobless young people find work, Mr Brown told BBC's *Breakfast with Frost* programme yesterday.

Private-sector employers would be offered a £60 a week rebate for six months for each person taken on full time under the age of 25 and unemployed for six months - on condition they guarantee one day off a

## Free child care helps lone parents return to work

NICHOLAS TIMMINS  
and DONALD MACINTYRE

The Jet programme - Jobs, Education and Training - was launched more than five years ago, targeted at lone parents with the aim of helping them back into work.

According to Labour's Social Justice Commission, which advocated the idea, it has reached nearly half of Australia's lone parents, significantly raising their levels of training, em-

ployment and earnings. "Savings have consistently outstripped targets and are now close to the overall programme costs," according to the commission. "Indeed, the programme has been so successful that the Australian government is now considering extending it to the registered long-term unemployed."

A key reason for the scheme's success was the help

offered with child care. Lone parents who are training or unemployed receive priority in publicly funded child-care services but the programme can finance temporary child care for its clients if they have trouble finding suitable help.

Under the Social Justice Commission's proposals, a UK Jet programme would provide a comprehensive re-employ-

ment service, providing a "one-stop re-employment shop" advising on education and training services, career possibilities, job openings and child-care facilities, as well as help in moving from out-of-work to in-work benefits.

The service should concentrate initially on those out-of-work for more than a year, allowing people newly unem-

ployed to simply sign on for the first 26 weeks - largely because many newly unemployed people find jobs quickly. It should then concentrate on those out of work for more than six months to ensure they do not remain so after a year.

Its role would include sponsoring "micro-entrepreneurs" who have the talent to move from unemployment to self-

employment". According to British Labour sources, the Australian government has saved £60m since introducing the scheme five years ago because it does not have to pay single parents' benefit to women in the scheme.

Although in the long term single parents who are provided with child-care facilities and suitable job opportunities could be required to accept work, there is no question of introducing compulsion at this stage.

Under the new proposals,

700,000 offers of employment and training would have to be made during the first year to cope with the 305,000 young people already unemployed for more than six months and the 400,000 who would join them.

Labour economists have advised that the scheme would cost £1bn in the first year and £400m in the second but would reap savings by the end of the Parliament. The party estimates that the one-off levy on the privatised industries would produce between £1.5bn and £3bn of revenue.

## Blunkett rails at 'rhetoric of past'

STEPHEN GOODWIN

David Blunkett, the Labour education spokesman, yesterday defended Tony Blair's decision to send his son to a grant-maintained school and warned the party against nostalgia.

Traditionalists will attempt to sway the conference behind a proposal to abolish "opt-out" schools, but Mr Blunkett told a fringe meeting Labour had to set an agenda for tomorrow rather than "repeating the rhetoric of yesterday".

The division over opt-out schools - a key feature of the Government's schools reforms - is likely to surface tonight at a meeting to be addressed by Roy Hattersley, who has accused the leadership of pandering to the middle-class.

Conference managers will oppose the abolition move on the grounds that it is odds with Labour's policy document *Diversity and Excellence*.

But Mr Blunkett told GMTV: "Some supporters should remember that there are those of us, including myself, who have been battling away for 30 years on the issue of equality of opportunity in education."

He was committed to "ensuring that comprehensive education actually works for every child, rather than simply being a rhetorical slogan".

On the Labour Leader's decision to send his son to the Oratory School, west London, Mr Blunkett said he thought Mr Blair was "wise to talk with his family about the options that would have been available to him if the Oratory School had remained a voluntary-aided school".

"No one would have blinked an eyelid had he sent his child there a few years ago."

Mr Blunkett said the party's policy on grant-maintained schools conformed with principles already agreed - equity of funding, a fair admissions policy, and a key planning role for local education authorities - and were designed to raise education standards for the majority, not the favoured few.

The commitment to limit class sizes for all children between five and seven, which Mr Blair is expected to announce tomorrow, was a key part of this, Mr Blunkett said. The pledge is expected to cost up to £36m and could be paid for by phasing out the £110m Assisted Places Scheme, which subsidises independent school places for children of low-income families.

The education spokesman also hinted at a review of the charitable status of independent schools. "We believe that schools like Eton, Prince William being there or anyone else, should not be treated as if they were Oxbridge. It is not our job to subsidise private education."

Trailing the themes Mr Blair will set out tomorrow, Mr Blunkett said welfare to work, raising standards in education and moving towards full employment were the core ideas of the modern Labour Party.

## Today's business

Conference will debate economic policy and renewal, fair taxes and benefits, and rights at work, including the minimum wage. The results of elections for the national executive committee, the national constitutional committee and the conference arrangements committee will also be announced.

## Union warning to Blair over voting share

BARRIE CLEMENT  
Labour Editor

Union leaders have warned Tony Blair they will fight any fresh attempt to reduce their influence over policy-making in the Labour Party.

In a recent meeting senior union representatives told the Labour leader that their vote at annual conferences should not be cut below 50 per cent.

Unions will hold 70 per cent of the votes at this week's annual party assembly in Brighton, but the proportion is due to move down to half next year.

At the biennial conference of the Transport and General Workers' Union in the summer Mr Blair indicated that he could envisage the percentage being reduced further as individual party membership increased.

However at a meeting of the "contact" group in the Commons, leaders of all the largest Labour affiliates told Mr Blair that they had serious misgivings about his policy of "constant revolution" of the party's internal structure.

Revelations about the contact meeting will be used by the Government to argue that the party is still "in hock" to the unions despite the new Labour image promoted by Mr Blair.

Most worrying for the party leadership was the attitude of the ultra-loyalist and right-led

Officials move to avert low-pay vote

Senior Labour officials and representatives of the biggest unions were in pursuit of a conference delegate in Brighton last night in an attempt to avert potential embarrassment today in a debate on the national minimum wage, writes Barrie Clement.

The party and its major affiliates hoped to persuade Jane Saren, from Edinburgh Central constituency, to remit a motion calling for a rate of £4.15. Party leaders want a low-pay commission to advise on a minimum figure under the Labour government and is anxious to avert a conference vote for any particular rate.

If Ms Saren refuses to co-operate, the chances of the motion being passed were hanging in the balance last night after unions seemed to be split on the issue. The largest affiliate, the Transport & General Workers Union,

had sought the revision of the proportion, but opted to oppose it if it is tabled. The union's policy is to back the £4.15 but T&G delegates are prepared to vote against it because of what appeared to be a drafting error.

The composite motion called for a minimum to be struck at half median earnings to be updated eventually to two-thirds of average earnings.

Bill Morris, leader of the T&G, pointed out his union's policy was that the amount should rise over time to two-thirds of "median" earnings. He denied his union was voting against the resolution to placate Tony Blair. The T&G leader said the wording of the motion was "confused" and that it was different to the union's policy.

The GMB general union also wants the proposition to be removed but will back it if it goes before the conference.

## New money makes old Labour's poverty a distant memory

CHRIS BLACKHURST  
Westminster Correspondent

Labour is well on the way to supplanting the Conservatives as the wealthiest political party in Britain.

The Tories may have the highest income - and historically have been able to count on more cash than their rivals at election time - but they are now paying the price for running up a huge overdraft in the early Nineties. While they grapple to bring it down, Labour is putting millions aside for the next general election. Accounts released to party delegates in Brighton for the annual conference this week show that Tony Blair has had a galvanising effect on the party's financial as well as political fortunes.

Last year delegates are told, Labour's general election fighting fund doubled to £4.5m. The Tories, who meet next

week in Blackpool, will be exhorted by their leaders to try even harder. Their accounts show a good surplus in their last financial year of £2.95m but that came at the expense of further cuts at Central Office and they offer no indication of where the cash for the next general election, now less than two years away, will come from.

All three parties are overdrawn. The Tories pared £4.5m off their deficit last year which now stands at £11.37m; Labour has cut its deficit from a peak of £2.5m in 1992 to the present £1.1m, while the Liberal Democrats have reduced their overdraft to £150,000.

Despite that, the Lib Dems

remain the poor relation. Unlike Labour, their work for the general election, to quote the chair of the party's finance committee, Tim Clement-Jones, is already "stretching our fund-raising capacity to the

## Supporters of PR face knife-edge vote

PATRICIA WYNNE DAVIES  
and STEPHEN GOODWIN

Labour supporters of a referendum on voting reform for the Commons were last night braced for a knife-edge vote on retaining the policy, amid fears that a big union might realign itself.

Speaking after an AEEU delegation meeting, Ken Jackson, acting general secretary, said his union did not want minority parties dictating policy to the Government - one of the principal objections to proportional representation.

A conference vote on Thursday

for Mr Smith's pledge to be retained, arguing that 20 years of argument must be resolved by asking the British people. And the party's national executive committee yesterday decided to support a motion favouring a referendum instead of remaining neutral as in the last two years.

One key campaigner for the reform said yesterday: "It would be a democratic outrage if this is determined by the union block vote."

But speaking at a fringe meeting, the left-wing Alice Mahon, MP for Halifax, said "certain people" on the NEC had changed their minds because they were "running

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As delegates gather in Brighton and Blackpool, they might reflect that they are making a vital contribution to party coffers. Annual conferences have become a vital part of the political year - not just for buoying up delegates and guaranteeing a media platform for a week. They are also big business. In 1993, Labour made a total profit of £2.6m from its conference.

Last year, in Blackpool with Mr Blair, it made £19.000. This week's profits should be even higher.

panies and individuals. While supporters still seem happy to pay, the Tories' dismal political performance may account for a slump in takings from the sale of books and souvenirs - a major factor in a £900.000 drop in surplus income. A resurgent Labour, by contrast, saw its earnings from publications more than double, from £131.000 to £335.000.

With Labour having almost doubled its membership to 350,000 since Mr Blair took over, his party is clearly riding the crest of a financial wave. Even so, he ignores the unions at his peril. They still account for about half of total income. As for all those people rushing to join, they do not come cheap. In the accounts, expenditure on "membership processing" has gone up from £547,000 to £605,000.

The worry for the Tories is that while they have slashed the

Central Office operation to the bone, it still eats money. Massively unpopular with the constituencies - last year almost 500 local associations failed to pay their full Central Office quota with more than a dozen contributing nothing at all - staff costs at Smith Square continue to rise, up from £5.7m to £5.9m last year.

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How the main parties are funded		
<b>Labour</b>	<b>Tories</b>	<b>Lib Dems</b>
Income:	£12.73m	£0.59m
Donations and subscriptions	£2.37m	£0.86m
Constituencies	£1.71m	£0.46m
Other sources	£1.23m	£0.26m
Total income	£15.30m	£1.31m
Expenditure:	£12.35m	£1.31m
Surplus	£2.95m	£0.05m
General Election Fund	N/A	£0.05m
Overdraft	£1.1m	£0.15m

مكتبة من الأجل

# Media circus comes to town for the West trial

WILL BENNETT

Winchester has staged important trials for hundreds of years. Sir Walter Raleigh stood accused of treason in the Great Hall in 1603 and, in more recent times, IRA terrorists have been driven to the Crown Court amid tight security.

But the ancient Hampshire city, once home to the king of Wessex, has never seen anything like the international media circus which is set to surround the trial of Rosemary West, on 10 charges of murder, which begins on Tuesday.

From the moment that the date and venue of the trial was announced six months ago the telephones in Winchester's hotels began to ring as journalists, television crews, legal teams and others involved in the trial vied to book the city's 617 rooms.

Hotel managers had to balance the obvious commercial benefits of block media bookings for the trial, which is expected to last seven weeks, against the needs to reserve

and introduced extra security measures.

The trial will take place in Court Three, which is spacious, modern, and utterly different from the austere oak-panelled grandeur of the Old Bailey where so many famous murder trials have been held.

Mr Justice Mantell, presiding judge of the western judicial circuit, noted for his love of cricket and a kindly manner, will hear the case. He also presided over the Joy Gardner case, when three police officers were acquitted of the manslaughter of Mrs Gardner, an illegal immigrant, earlier this year.

The prosecution will be led by Brian Leveson QC, who took over the case from Neil Butterfield QC when the latter was appointed a High Court judge. He represented the Football Association when George Graham, the former Arsenal manager, was banned from the sport for accepting cash payments during transfer deals.

Mrs West will be represented by Richard Ferguson QC, one of Britain's best known defence barristers. A former Ulster Unionist politician who chaired the Criminal Bar Association last year, his many high-profile briefs have included defending both Ernest Saunders in the Guinness case and Terry Marsh, the former boxer acquitted of the attempted murder of promoter Frank Warren.

To Mr Leveson's right will sit Detective Superintendent John Bennett, the officer who led the murder inquiry which began at the West family home at 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester, on 24 February 1994 and which ultimately cost £1.4 million.

People in the 52-seat public gallery, who are likely to include relatives of those found buried at Cromwell Street, will not be able to see Mrs West, 41, in the dock below. She now faces the charges alone following the suicide of her husband Frederick in prison last New Year's Day.

During the trial Mrs West will be held in Winchester Prison, half a mile from the court. There she will live in a special unit made from seven cells in the prison's segregation wing, which includes her own washing machine and dryer, and a visiting room where she can meet her family and lawyers.

Getting Mrs West from the prison to the court and back each day during the trial is the responsibility of Inspector Paul Stallard of Hampshire Police. He estimates that the journey will take two minutes each way, although one of the motorcycle escorts believes that they could do it in 75 seconds if necessary.

The road will be closed to other traffic during these two brief periods and 15 extra police officers will be on duty to control over-enthusiastic photographers and television crews, and curious members of the public. Insp Stallard said: "My aim is to get Mrs West down to the court and back again with the minimum of hindrance to herself and the minimum of inconvenience to the people of Winchester."

Mrs West denies the charges.

Rosemary West: Trial for murder begins tomorrow

rooms for the regular customers who support them in less hectic times. David Johnson, general manager of the 94-room Forte Crest, just 200 yards from the city's cathedral, said: "Loyalty to our regular customers is very important and we have allocated 40 per cent of the rooms in the hotel to the media and the rest to other clients."

Empty flats and offices near the Crown Court were rented within weeks, mostly for television crews, and restaurants and other small businesses expect a boost in trade just as the normal tourist season in Winchester winds down. About 130 reporters and hundreds of newspaper and television cameramen from all over the world are expected.

The case went to Winchester for security reasons and because the recently completed Crown Court in Bristol is too close to the scene of the alleged murders in Gloucester. Winchester's court also has better facilities for coping with intense media interest than the Old Bailey in London.

For Alan Davison, chief clerk to Winchester Crown Court, the case has meant a much larger workload. He has leased two disused magistrates' courts next door to serve as a media amanuensis. installed more telephone lines,

## DAILY POEM

**At The End**  
By RS Thomas

Few possessions: a chair,  
a table, a bed  
to say my prayers by;  
and, gathered from the shore,  
the bone-like, crossed sticks  
proving that nature  
acknowledges the Crucifixion.  
All night I am at  
a window not too small  
to be frame to the stars  
that are no further off  
than the city lights.  
I have rejected, by day  
the passers-by, who are not  
pilgrims, stare through the rain's  
bars, seeing me a prisoner  
of one view, I who  
have been made free  
by the view; I who  
have been made free  
by the tide's pendulum truth  
that the heart that is low now  
will be at the full tomorrow.

RS Thomas was born in Cardiff in 1913 and has spent most of his life in Wales, from 1936 as a clergyman in the Church of Wales. One of the great poetic voices of the 20th century, now in his eighties, Thomas is still writing as powerfully as ever. His candidature for the Nobel Prize for Literature for 1996 is supported both by the latest winner, Kenzaburo Oe, and by Lord Gowrie. More than twenty books of his poetry have appeared since 1946, this poem taken from his latest collection published by Bloodaxe Books, *No Trace with the Furies*.

RS Thomas will be reading from his poetry tomorrow at Jarvis Royal Hotel, Cardiff, at 8pm as part of the 1995 Cardiff Literature Festival. Box Office inquiries to 01222 878444.

# Fried Mars Bar and chips wins place on the menu



Work, rest and fry: A Mars Bar goes into the frier  
Photograph: Jeremy Sutton-Hibbert

JOHN ARLIDGE  
Scotland Correspondent

Walk into the Haven fish and chip shop in Stonehaven and ask for a Mars Bar from the sweet counter. "Plain or in batter?" asks Evelyn Balgown, who has been frying in the town's leading chippy since she was 14. For locals there is only one answer: "In batter, with chips."

This year Scots, for whom fried food is the only food, have invented a new dish - the Mars Bar supper, the famous combination of sugar, glucose and chocolate covered in thick, fish-batter, with a plastic tray of chips, for just 99p.

It started in Stonehaven, near Aberdeen, which until now has only been famous for its fish. This summer one local man, bored with his daily scone, asked Miss Balgown for a Mars Bar and suggested she fry it. "I just dunked it in the batter and chuck it in the frier," she said. "The batter stopped the chocolate melting and the result was crispy on the outside and gooey on the inside." The man liked the new sweet takeaway and, once local children heard about the delicacy, the



Dietician's nightmare: A favourite with the young

queue at 4pm stretched round the block. Ria Fowler, 15, who works in her auntie's fish shop after school, said she liked the new, warm Mars because "it's sweet and sticks to your teeth".

And now that the dish's popularity is spreading - Mars Bars are frying tonight across Scotland - the Haven has extended its menu to include deep-fried Yorkies, Snickers, Crunchies, even Chewitts. But not everyone is happy. Some parents have criticised the chippy for encouraging youngsters to eat

high-fat, high-cholesterol food in a country which has the worst heart-disease record in Western Europe. Miss Balgown has even received hate mail. But she defends her creation: "It's not that much worse than a normal Mars Bar."

And the taste? For a true Stonehaven supper the *Independent* recommends a large deep-fried pickled egg with salad cream and chips, followed by a lightly fried Mars Bar, all washed down with Glasgow's finest - warm Irn-Bru.

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## international

**European summit:** Finance ministers insist monetary union will go ahead on schedule but they still have to convince the public

# Good ship 'Emu' wrenched back on course

SARAH HELM

Valencia

Under the deep blue skies of the Spanish coast, Europe's future seemed suddenly so clear. Monetary union must go ahead, decided finance ministers, meeting in Valencia at the weekend.

Let nobody be in any doubt, the ministers declared, the good ship *Emu* is well on course to reach safe harbour by 1999, and national currencies will be replaced by a single European currency which will probably be called the Euro.

The meeting was another turning point for European monetary union. The ministers were under pressure to consider a delay, following signs that Germany might be wavering at the prospect of replacing the strong mark with an untested single currency. The Franco-German alliance was fracturing, amid fears that even France might not make the economic grade for

Emu, and opinion polls across Europe have shown growing public doubt.

The Valencia meeting left no question about the seriousness of European governments' intention to proceed. It was as if the turmoil in the financial market had never happened and as if the doubts of the Germans had suddenly been dispelled. "There will be time" to convince the people and "there will be time" to

### Smart money is on the 'Euro'

Valencia — They won't admit it yet, but Europe's single currency looks almost certain to be called "the Euro". The "Florin" is still a runner, and the "Franken" is a name favoured by some, writes Sarah Helm.

One idea was to use Euro as a prefix to existing national currency names, hence the Euro-pound or the Euro-mark. However, at Valencia there was informal consensus over lunch

that the fears, chimed ministers, as the noise of public protest lapped away across the sea.

The real significance of the Valencia meeting, however, remains unclear. Was the determination of ministers to go ahead as planned an act of brave political leadership? Or did the Spanish sun just blind them to the wave of serious doubts which still threatened to push their ship off course?

Details of the timetable, and economic criteria, were clearly reaffirmed. In December this year, heads of government will make the final ruling on the currency's name, and settle practical plans for its changeover.

The Valencia meeting decided.

In January next year the European Commission will launch an advertising campaign to teach the public of Europe how the single currency will work. By the

end of 1997 all member states who are eligible to join, and wish to do so, must have their economies under tight control. The decisions on which countries have met the economic tests — including reducing public debt and budget deficits — will be based on 1997 economic results, and will be made as early as possible.

On 1 January 1999, monetary union will begin with the locking of exchange rates, and the launch of a single monetary policy. After three years Euro notes and coins will start to circulate. For six months national currencies will circulate in parallel with Euro-money, but will then cease to be legal tender.

The name Ecu, envisaged by the Maastricht treaty, has now lost all favour. Germany in particular objected to the name, fearing it would become associated in the German public mind with Europe's weak basket currency.

so weighted down with dogma, that the European public has not been brought face-to-face with the reality of losing familiar notes and coins. Once the currency is finally named and the educational campaign starts, however, the public will start to give its verdict: the signs suggest that it might well be "no".

Britain's scepticism is well known, and at Valencia Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, reasserted Britain's right to exercise its opt-out. However, whatever timetables Valencia may have agreed, there is no certainty that even Helmut Kohl, the pro-European German Chancellor, will be able to sell the single currency to his voters. Theo Waigel, the German Finance Minister, who raised questions 10 days ago, was giving voice to mounting German fears about sinking the mark into a single currency. A German poll published before the Valencia meeting showed that 45 per cent of

Germans would vote against monetary union and only 31 per cent would support it. Any further hesitation from German leaders will send financial markets into new turmoil.

The issue of monetary union in the European public mind, is inextricably linked with a wider debate about more political power-sharing for the EU, which comes to a head at next year's Inter-Governmental Conference. For now, governments appear confused and divided about Europe's political future. If these divisions are not resolved before next year's IGC, the confusion will only heighten public fear about monetary union.

In France there has been little public debate on the single currency as yet. However, President Jacques Chirac knows that if he is to act on the declarations of Valencia he must swiftly impose stringent measures to cut the budget deficit sufficiently to meet the Emu criteria. In the



Clarke: Reasserted Britain's right to exercise its opt-out

debate on political union, Mr Chirac is also under strong pressure to make unpopular concessions on French sovereignty. In the next few months, French support for Emu — and for Mr Chirac — may also ebb away.

Leading article, page 16

## Envoy plays down hopes for Bosnia

STEVE CRAWSHAW

Belgrade

# Nigerian 'plotters' escape the firing squad

DAVID ORR  
Lagos

Sani Abacha, Nigeria's military ruler, yesterday said he would not allow the return of democracy in Africa's most populous nation for another three years.

The general, who seized power in the wake of an annulled presidential election two years ago, also said Chief Moshood Abiola, the presumed winner, was not to be freed from prison, where he has been held for more than a year. However, the sentences on 40 alleged coup plotters are to be commuted in deference to appeals from the international community.

In a television broadcast to mark the 35th anniversary of Nigeria's independence, General Abacha laid out his plans for the transition to democracy. His Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) would step down in 1998, he said, after the holding of legislative and presidential elections. The remaining restrictions on party political activity are to be lifted this year.

The country is to be divided into six zones in the run-up to 1998. Six key offices, including President and Prime Minister, will thereafter be rotated among the zones over "an experimental period" of 30 years.

The treason charge facing

ty. The rest, including a former head of state, Olusegun Obasanjo, are understood to have been given life sentences.

"Abacha has defused the immediate crisis," a Western diplomat said yesterday. "The greatest pressure on him was to release the so-called coup plotters. People won't be very happy about Abiola, and they won't be pleased about the three-year transition period, but they won't be surprised either."

In commuting the sentences Gen Abacha has indicated his desire to mend relations with the international community which have, of late, been particularly strained. Britain, the US and South Africa are among countries to have appealed for clemency for the political detainees and a speedy resumption of constitutional government.

In addition to calls for sanctions, there has been pressure for the exclusion of Nigeria from the Commonwealth when heads of government meet in New Zealand next month.

"Abacha probably feels he's done what he had to do for Nigerians and has gone far enough in accommodating international opinion," said another diplomatic source. "The news about the coup plotters is encouraging, as is the fact that a specific date for the handover has been given. But the length of the transition period is longer than anyone would have liked".

The introduction of a rotational system of government will go some way towards placating ethnic groups which see themselves as having been disenfranchised by a succession of governments from the north. The Hausa-Fulani of the Muslim north have dominated politics at the expense of the Yoruba in the south-west and the Ibo in the south-east, both largely Christian regions.

The continued detention of Chief Abiola, a Yoruba and a Moslem, will be particularly unpopular in the south, where he remains a rallying-point for opponents of the regime.

However, no unrest is expected from an opposition which has become demoralised and dispirited in the face of constant repression.

"When Abacha took power nearly two years ago he said he would only be there for a brief period," said Gani Fawehinmi, a lawyer who is the most outspoken opposition figure in Nigeria. "Again he's shown he's not a man to be trusted. His transition programme is a ruse to buy time. He has an intention of handing over power in three years."

Nigeria has been under rule by the military for more than 25 of the past 35 years. In that time a succession of army men have reneged on promises to return the country to democracy. Only Gen Obasanjo stood down voluntarily.

Abacha: Delaying return of democracy by three years

Chief Abiola, who declared himself president in defiance of the military, has not been lifted. Referring to the June 1993 election, which Chief Abiola is regarded as having won, Gen Abacha said: "We cannot make progress by flogging dead issues or by pretending that matters which have long since been overtaken by events should be exhumed and given fresh breath".

Acknowledging "the concerns of world leaders ... who appealed to us to show clemency", he said those convicted of taking part in a coup plot earlier this year would have their sentences commuted. Fourteen alleged plotters are believed to have received the death penalty.

## Britain wary about promise of democracy

MICHAEL SHERIDAN  
Diplomatic Editor

Britain welcomed yesterday's announcement by Sani Abacha of clemency for the alleged coup plotters but there were doubts in the Foreign Office over the scale and speed of the Nigerian leader's promised transition to democracy.

The cautious British reaction indicated that those Commonwealth member-nations which favour a harder line towards the military junta are unlikely to find General Abacha's promises acceptable. There must still be a question-mark over his participation in the Commonwealth summit next month and some members at the meeting will press for sanctions against Nigeria.

"We welcome the exercise of clemency," a Foreign Office spokeswoman said yesterday, "but we remain concerned that long prison sentences have been imposed after secret trials." Incremental oil sanctions should be imposed on Nigeria: these would cut its revenues and intensify dissatisfaction with the regime. Such drastic sanctions would also make it impossible for Gen Abacha to undertake the regeneration of the economy, which he has said is needed before democracy can be restored.



Ready for change: A civilian crowd in Comoros shouting support for the coup

Photograph: Corinne Dufka/Reuters

# international

## Captain takes over Comoros

TOM COHEN  
Associated Press

Moroni — A military officer in jail until three days ago announced himself leader of the island territory of the Comoros yesterday.

Captain Comba Ayoubou, imprisoned after a failed 1992 coup attempt, said in an interview on the terrace of the presidential palace that he had plotted last Thursday's seizure of power, led by a French mercenary, Bob Denard, from jail.

Moroni, the capital, was calm yesterday. Children swam in the ocean despite a rainstorm, and a few rebel soldiers guarded key installations such as the radio station, site of the only serious clash of the coup.

Mr Denard and more than a dozen other foreign mercenaries involved in the coup had finished their job and would play no role in the new government.

Captain Ayoubou said:

"We are going to change this country," said the bearded Captain Ayoubou, 42. "We got support from the army for a quick change."

His ruling committee has promised to consult all political parties in setting up an interim leadership that would hold national elections. No date has been proposed for the talks.

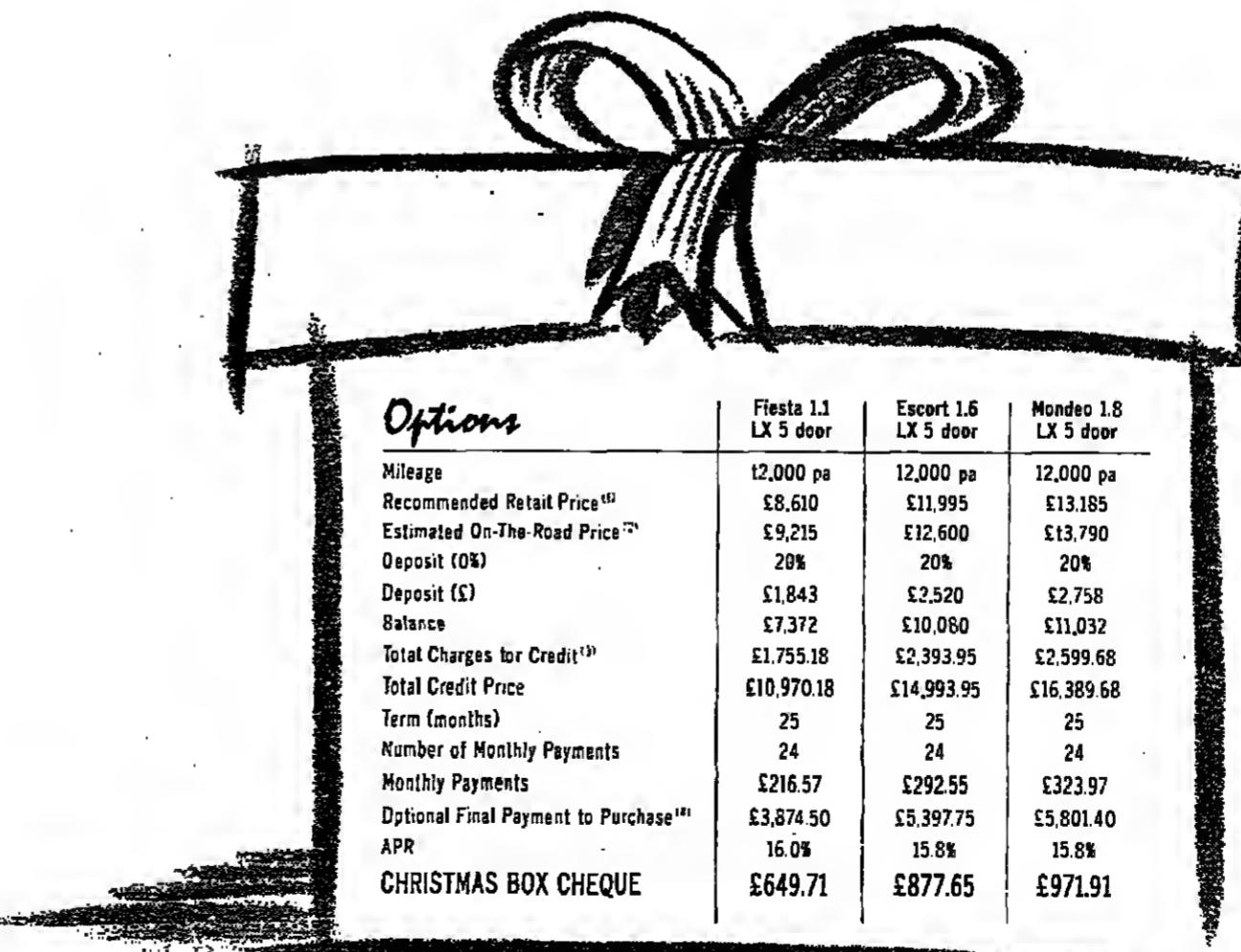
On Saturday the overthrown government and an opposition party pleaded for international help in driving out the mercenaries.

France, the former colonial power, has so far refused to intervene militarily, although it has put its 4,000 troops in the region on full alert, and French navy ships carrying landing craft are on the high seas.

The overthrown prime minister, Caambi el Yashouru, called from his refuge in the French embassy for France to take action.

France has cut aid to the Comoros, and has called for a return in constitutional order.

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## international

### Exiles appeal to Mubarak

KHALED DAWOOD  
Reuter

Salloum, Egypt — Palestinians ordered out of Libya and forcibly encamped on the border with Egypt appealed to President Hosni Mubarak yesterday to help them go home.

Khaled Abou el-Nil and Sami el-Maghribi, acting on behalf of about 200 of their stranded compatriots, handed the written appeal to Egyptian state security officers through the barbed-wire fence which marks the desert border. They said the people in the camp were also planning a demonstration to highlight their request in go to the self-rule areas of Gaza and the West Bank.

"We are appealing to the world to find a just solution to our problem," said Mr Abou el-Nil, a merchant who arrived at the makeshift camp.

"Where can we go? Maybe the best solution is for the world to dig us a hole and bury us in it."

The Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi, who calls the

PLO-Israeli peace deal a capitulation to the Jewish state, has ordered the expulsion of some 6,000 Palestinians over the past three months in protest.

Since Thursday, when Israel and the Palestinians signed a deal expanding Palestinian self-rule to much of the West Bank, expulsions have accelerated.

The rubbish-strewn camp, hemmed in by barbed wire and Libyan security officials, was set up on Libyan soil to shelter the deportees. Three of the 100 tents have been made into a hospital, a school and a mosque.

Mr Maghrabi said the Libyans were setting up more military tents for the hundreds expected to arrive at the scorpion-infested site in the coming days. Groups stuck at the border last month said they were reduced to begging for food from travellers. Water is also scarce.

Egypt is reluctant to accept expelled Palestinians unless they have travel papers for Jordan, Gaza or the West Bank.

Other Arab countries adopt a similar policy.



Troubled water: Police scuffle with Jewish protesters against the West Bank deal at Allenby Bridge over the Jordan  
Photograph: Jim Hollander/Reuter

### Dig could unleash unholy Hebron row

PATRICK COCKBURN  
Jerusalem

An Israeli archaeologist, Tovia Segev, wants to dig up the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron to prove that Abraham is not buried there, thus defusing the conflict between Muslims and Jews over a place holy to both. Mr Segev believes the prophet probably lies in another part of Hebron, which he also wants to excavate.

No shrine on the West Bank has produced greater passions than the Tomb of the Patriarchs. The 400 militant Jews who have settled in the heart of Hebron, surrounded by 120,000 Palestinians, have done so largely to be close to where they believe Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lie buried with their wives. Last year Baruch Goldstein, an Israeli settler, killed 29 Muslims as they prayed in the Ibrahimi mosque, which stands over the reputed tombs.

The medieval mosque rests

on vast blocks of stone which survive from the masonry platform built by Herod the Great.

Mr Segev says that in fact Herod built on an old Edomite or Nabatean prayer site, and if Abraham and his family are buried anywhere, it is at Tel Rumeida, in another part of Hebron.

Abraham is said in the Book of Genesis to have bought the Cave of Machpelah to bury his wife Sarah and to serve as a sepulchre for her family. There is a blocked medieval doorway to the cave in the mosque, but archaeologists who have entered say it is a series of rooms rather than a natural formation.

Israel Finkelstein, professor of archaeology at Tel Aviv University, says that the problem is that "nobody quite knows when the patriarchs lived or what archaeological evidence to look for". He says it is not known why Herod built there, though he is dismissive of Mr Segev's idea that evidence of the presence of the patriarchs might be found at Tel Rumeida.

Mr Segev says that he has interested Shimon Peres, the Israeli Foreign Minister, in an excavation at the Tomb of the Patriarchs, but it is unlikely that any Israeli government will want to offend Jews and Muslims simultaneously. Even if the remains of Abraham's tomb were found at Mr Segev's site, peace would not immediately break out, because Tel

Rumeida is occupied by another Jewish settlement.

The 40-page agreement on partial Israeli disengagement from the West Bank signed by Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli Prime Minister, and Yasser Arafat, the PLO chairman, is meant to reduce all sources of friction, including the two communities' access to the Tomb of the Patriarchs. But the mood of ordinary Israelis has been muted and a little cynical, unlike the optimism after the first Washington agreement in 1993. The experience of the past two years shows that the friction in places like Hebron is not ending, and will still produce violence.

Israelis are evenly divided by the peace agreement, polls showing 51 per cent in favour and 47 per cent against. Most say they distrust Mr Arafat, but a majority want to go on talking to him. They do not like the release of 1,300 Palestinian prisoners over the next few days, but they do not identify with the settlers either. "The fact is that the general public has long since in practice separated itself from the West Bank — it doesn't go there for touring or shopping," says Yoel Marcus, a commentator on Ha'aretz newspaper.

Israeli television, both state and private, probably reflected the public mood by not interrupting its programme to show Mr Rabin's press conference immediately after agreement was first reached in Taba, Egypt.

#### IN BRIEF

##### French clamp down on nuclear protesters

Papeete — France is clamping down on anti-nuclear and independence activists before its second nuclear test in the South Pacific, detaining Tahitians daily and using television footage of riots to make arrests. Stanley Cross, lawyer for Tavini Huiraatira Party (Liberation Front of French Polynesia), the territory's largest independence party, said about 50 people had been arrested in connection with rioting after France resumed testing at Mururoa atoll on 5 September.

France seized Greenpeace's 120ft *Manutea*, the group's last remaining protest vessel, in international waters yesterday. The head of Greenpeace Japan, Sanae Shida, was deported from French Polynesia on Saturday after she and three others raided the secondary nuclear test site on Fangataufa atoll on Thursday. A New Zealander, Hank Haazen, was also deported. Agencies

##### Resignation piles poll pressure on Ciller

Ankara — The Turkish Prime Minister, Tansu Ciller (right), faced added pressure for early elections with the resignation of the speaker of parliament. Huseyin Cudoruk, a member of Ms Ciller's centre-right True Path Party but a long-time adversary, said that elections should be held every four years, rather than five as under the present constitution. General elections are now scheduled for next autumn. Mrs Ciller's coalition collapsed on 20 September and her party has been unable to find a new coalition partner. AP



##### Bomb accomplices face investigation

Paris — A French magistrate opened an inquiry yesterday into two alleged accomplices of Khaled Kelkal, 24, an Algerian-born man shot dead by police who was suspected of involvement in a wave of bomb attacks in France, judicial sources said. Abdellah Maameri, 25, and Abeklader Bouhadjar, 28, also of Algerian origin, were formally placed under investigation for criminal conspiracy with a terrorist activity and jailed. Reuter

##### Victims of revolution beatified

Vatican City — Pope John Paul beatified 64 martyrs from the French Revolution, as well as 45 priests, nuns and faithful killed in the Spanish civil war. Almost 7,000 Catholic priests, monks and nuns were killed during the 1936-39 war by forces opposed to General Francisco Franco. Reuter

##### Fundamentalists kill 18 on Algerian bus

Algiers — Islamic militants killed 18 people and injured 15, mostly children, in an attack on a bus near Laghout, 200 miles south of Algiers. Algerian security forces said. Police said that they killed four members of the group as they made their retreat. AP

##### Thai crocodiles get carried away

Bangkok — About 300 crocodiles have fled their farms and remain at large in Thailand, where a bounty of 3,000 baht (£75) has been offered for each one captured, a Thai-language daily said yesterday. The crocodiles were carried away by flood waters from private farms north of Bangkok. AFP

## Thyroid Problems?

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# international

## NY court convicts terror plot Muslims

DAVID USBORNE  
New York

The most sweeping terrorism trial in American history concluded in New York yesterday with guilty verdicts against 10 Muslim militants who had been accused variously of plotting to blow up buildings, bridges and tunnels, undermine the government and assassinate the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak.

After 37 hours of deliberation at the end of a trial that had already lasted nine months, the jury in the New York court delivered the verdicts late yesterday morning, vindicating prosecutors who had said that the 10 had come close to unleashing a "war of urban terrorism" on Manhattan, designed to persuade the US government to change its policy in the Middle East.

The leader of the group was Sheikh Omar Abd-el-Rahman, a blind, 57-year-old Islamic cleric who first came to the US and the New York area in 1990. He was found guilty on five different counts of attempted terrorism, including solicitation to murder President Mubarak.

Also among the defendants was El Sayid Nosair, a soldier of the Islamic Jihad movement who was separately found guilty of involvement in the 1990 assassination in New York of the extremist Rabbi Meir Kahane. Nosair had been acquitted of the murder in 1991, but jailed for related weapons charges.

At the heart of the trial, however, were the allegations that all eight other defendants had, with the encouragement of Sheikh Rahman, engaged in an elaborate plot to bomb a series of New York buildings and

landmarks. According to prosecutors, five bombs were to be detonated in just 10 minutes, destroying two tunnels leading into Manhattan, the George Washington Bridge and the United Nations headquarters.

FBI videos submitted as evidence showed the men mixing bomb-making materials in a New York garage. The defence said the eight believed that the bombs would be used to aid the Muslim side in Bosnia.

The government believes that Sheikh Rahman and Nosair were sent to the United States as part of a wider campaign, led by Islamic Jihad, to destabilise the US government and weaken its friendly ties with Israel and Egypt. The bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993 was believed to have been part of the campaign.

The World Trade Center attack, which left six dead, was repeatedly evoked by the prosecution during the trial, although no specific evidence linking the ten to it was offered. Four men were jailed for the bombing of the twin towers in a separate trial last year.

The government will celebrate yesterday's convictions, which it hopes will mark the crumbling of the threat by Islamic fundamentalists in New York. The authorities will feel more comfortable having the ten behind bars during the UN 50th anniversary celebrations later this month, when the heads of government of nearly 150 nations will gather into the UN complex.

The defence lawyer for Sheikh Rahman, Lynne Stewart, cried in court yesterday: "He is not the first person to go to prison for his beliefs and he won't be the last," she said.

## Decision time for OJ jury

EDWARD HELMORE  
Los Angeles

After nine months of evidence and the final, wrenching appeal by the prosecution to convict, the jurors in the murder trial of OJ Simpson will today start the unenviable task of reaching a verdict.

Whatever their decision – to convict, acquit or agree to disagree and return as a hung jury – they have a huge burden to carry and a vast amount of evidence to sift through.

Maintaining the routine they have followed since their sequestration began in January, the jury will be driven to the courthouse from their hotel every morning and return at night. Until they reach their verdict, they will deliberate six days a week in a small room.

The nine women and three men, one of whom is black, two white and one Hispanic, hold the responsibility for Mr Simpson's fate, and the social unrest that could result from a guilty verdict.

Last week, as the two sides presented their closing arguments, analysts' predictions shifted between verdicts. Will ju-

rors be seduced by the defence's plea to acquit? The kernel of the defence argument is that the police framed him and that the jury should now send a message about the racial divisions in Los Angeles, and by association America. That is fraught with difficulties.

Last month Judge Lance Ito stopped Detective Mark Fuhrman's boasts of fabricating evidence from reaching the jury. In making that ruling the judge found there was no evidence to support the defence contention that Mr Simpson was framed.

Besides the uncertain motive of racism, why would the police want to frame him? Mr Simpson had entertained police officers at his house and even hired off-duty policemen to protect him. The idea that a force which made such a sloppy job of collecting evidence could stage an elaborate operation to frame him is far-fetched.

For Mr Simpson this waiting will mean more time in his 9ft by 7ft font cell. The cell is equipped with some of the benefits of celebrity – an incoming-only telephone, an exercise bicycle and his own television set.

Racial politics, page 17

## Helms does deal to lift freeze on embassy posts

RUPERT CORNWELL  
Washington

Jesse Helms, the cantankerous North Carolina Republican who chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has struck a deal with the White House to end the virtual freeze he imposed on State Department business on Capitol Hill, which left 15 per cent of US embassies without ambassadors.

Under the compromise, Senate Democrats and Republicans have agreed to produce legislation to reorganise the US foreign policy bureaucracy. This would replace Mr Helms's measure, merging the agencies responsible for foreign aid, information and disarmament, and placing them under the control of the State Department. This, says Mr Helms, would save \$3bn (£1.9bn) a year.

The administration ignored the proposal. Mr Helms retaliated by effectively shutting down his committee. More than 30 ambassadorial nominees were left dangling in mid-air, including the former Tennessee Senator Jim Sasser, appointed

to Peking. About 400 internal promotions have been held up. Major arms treaties, including Salt II, have gone unratified.

The breakthrough is not the end of the problem for Warren Christopher, the Secretary of State, as he tries to stave off a near 25-per-cent cut in the State Department budget next year.

The cuts, saving only \$300m, would cut the less cost scores of jobs at home, as well as 50 diplomatic posts abroad.



Wallace: 'I was wrong about civil rights ... Now segregation's gone – good riddance'

## Old segregationist sees the light from the right

His brown hair is grey now, but is still slicked back in movie-gangster style. The eyebrows remain bushy, looming over the piercing dark eyes that tried, in 1963, to stare down the US government. And his pinched lips can still break into a snarl, as they did when he proclaimed: "Segregation today! Segregation tomorrow! Segregation forever!"

But George Wallace, 75, the Alabama governor who stood "in the schoolhouse door" over 30 years ago to try to prevent two black students from entering the state university, appears much different today. He has been in a wheelchair since 1972, paralysed in an assassination attempt during the second of his three presidential campaigns. He has Parkinson's disease, his eyesight is poor, and he can barely hear or speak.

But inside the broken body is a new man, freed by fate from his hard-right chrysalis, a man at peace with himself and the world. Mr Wallace, a born-again Christian since he was shot, recently talked of race and redemption with John F Kennedy Jr, son of John and nephew of Robert Kennedy. He has Parkinson's disease, his eyesight is poor, and he can barely hear or speak.

Was he ahead of his time? Mr Wallace's calls for law and order and advocacy of states' rights strike a chord today.

Many consider him the spiritual father of the Republicans' "Contract With America". He expects Bob Dole to win the Republican nomination and to carry the South. He is a fan of Bill Clinton: "I'd tell him ... not to put gays in the military and

to stop being for abortion". Colin Powell is "a very fine man" and Jesse Jackson is "a good friend". But no, he does not expect to see a black president in the time left to him.

"People have always equated segregation with baiting," Mr Wallace said. "But that's not true. We were all taught that segregation was in the best interest of the people ... I'm not a different man I didn't hate blacks 30 years ago, and I don't hate blacks today."

Nor, he said, did his politics change after he was born again. "I was taught that segregation was best for both races. But then, a few years ago, I decided it wasn't ... My conscience said it was wrong. Wrong, wrong, wrong ... And now segregation's gone. Good riddance."

If he had his life to live over, Mr Wallace said, "I wouldn't have sinned as much as I did." Was he prepared to die? "I'm not afraid of death like I used to be, because ... I'll be forgiven my sins."

"What are your sins?" Mr Kennedy asked. "I tell my sins to God, not to people like you." The old devil snarled.

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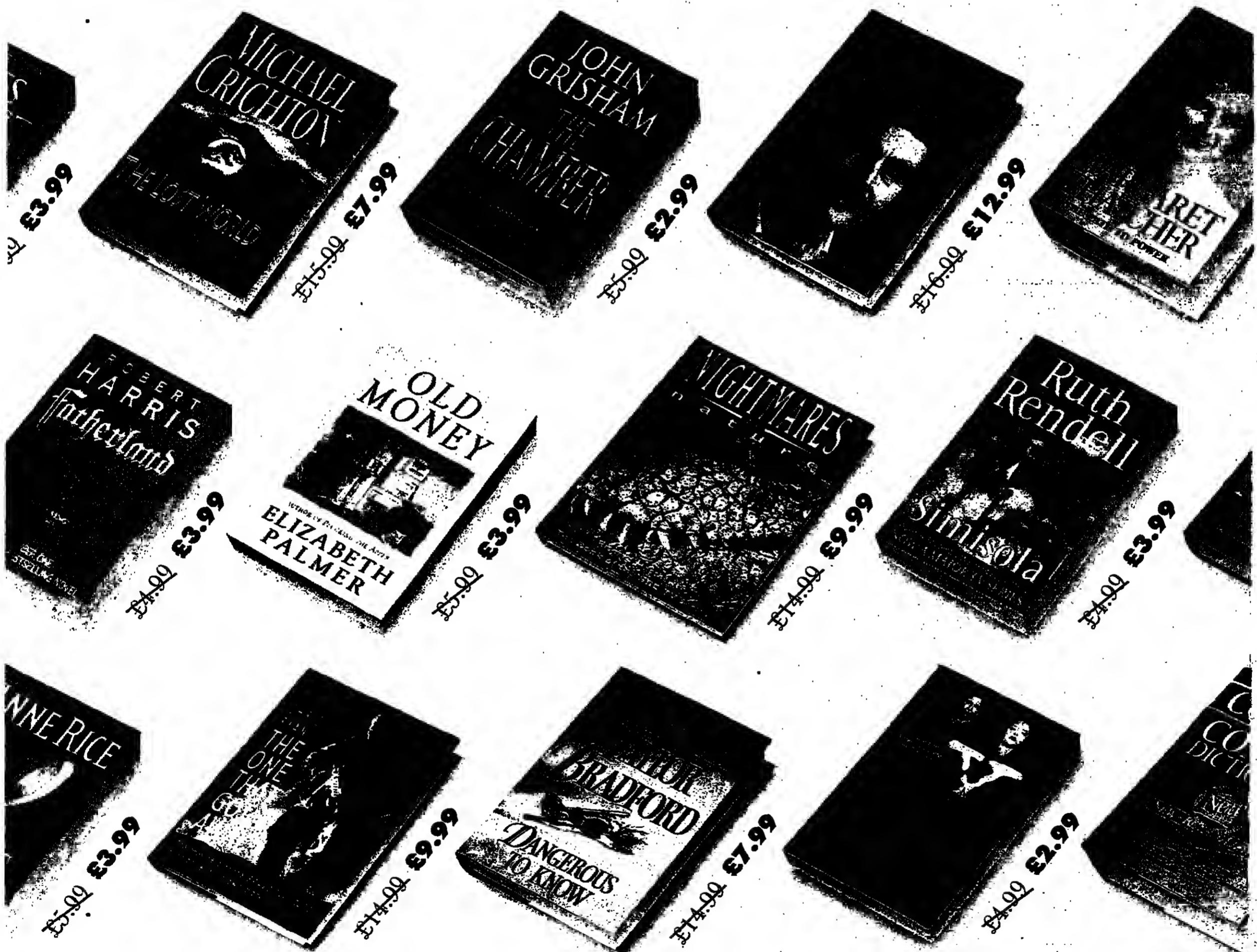
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## special report

# They like Blair's style – but not his vision

As Labour gathers in Brighton,  
James Cusick and  
John Rentoul find the party's  
recruits are New Pragmatists  
who put victory before ideals

For the first time, Labour is now a larger party than the Conservatives, according to some academic estimates. The influx of new recruits has been claimed by Tony Blair as a massive endorsement of his "New Labour". As membership has leaped by 100,000 to 350,000 in the 15 months since Blair became leader, he can fairly boast to have confounded the fashionable cynics who told him the days of mass political parties were over: something dramatic is clearly happening.

Until now no one has known what sort of people they are, why they joined the party and whether they are different from the existing membership. Is their vision Blair's vision? Will they go along with him in government or will they be impatient for radical change? In his speech to last year's conference, Blair himself joked: "I hear some of you support me just because you think I can win."

Evidence gathered by the *Independent* suggests he was right. The new recruits are the "New Pragmatists": their views are more old Labour than new, but they support Blair because they think he will beat the hated Tories. And, because their expectations of him are limited to victory and they understand he is different from them, he may even have an easier ride in government than any of his predecessors.

The only substantial academic survey of Labour members is now seriously out of date. Patrick Seyd and Paul Whiteley of Sheffield University interviewed 3,000 Labour members in 1989-90. They had more left-wing attitudes than the leadership on nationalisation, defence and education. But there was evidence of pragmatism even then: 57 per cent agreed that Labour "should adjust its policies to capture the middle ground of politics". Mr Seyd says the new members interviewed in a follow-up study in mid-1992 were "more supportive of electoral reform, but were not much out of line with existing members in their general attitudes". Now he admits it is "tautologically frustrating" not to know who the Blair intake are and what they think. "Mr Blair obviously thinks they are malleable credit-card players whereas the left think they are crypto-SDP-ers. We simply don't know," he says.

In March this year, the Labour Party carried out its own survey of about 1 per cent of those who joined in the previous year. It was a self-selected sample who filled in a questionnaire in *Labour Party News*, and told little about their views – merely that 60 per cent were men, 47 per cent were in "professional" jobs and only 29 per cent were under 35. In other words, much like existing members, only more middle-class and a bit younger.



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In order to find out more, the *Independent*'s own mini-survey spoke to a random sample of 50 people who have joined in the past year – it provides the first important clues to the identity of the New Pragmatists. Because Labour holds its conference today in a model constituency of the "new" party, we chose the Brighton Labour Party for our survey. Membership here has risen from 900 to 1,400 since Blair was elected leader. Like the party's survey, our sample were not particularly young. Only five were students, despite a large student population in Brighton, and many were retired – joining because they had "time on their hands".

The first truth to establish about the new members is that they are not an uncritical Tony Blair fan club. Revisionism from the Conservatives is a more powerful force than the attraction to Blair – although he is important because he both articulates that revision and inspires confidence that the Tories can be beaten. They are not uniformly convinced that every change and every silence is needed, yet they sense they are on a winning side.

Carin McBride, 18, is a young New Pragmatist. Joining while still studying for her A-levels, she was inspired by one of Blair's speeches, although Blair did not deliver it. "It was at the Theatre Royal in Brighton with Sir Ian McKellen quoting from a speech Blair had given on the age of consent. It just struck me off."

On Blair, herself she is not completely convinced. "I've mixed views. I don't like everything he's saying like he's not going to renationalise – I don't see why we should go along with that." She does not trust Blair 100 per cent, but she trusts him to "pull votes from disenchanted Tories".

McBride won an assisted place to Brighton and Hove High School, a private girls' school. From a "council estate,

they are not an uncritical Tony Blair fan club.

Revisionism from the Conserva-

Britain's 22nd most marginal. The 8 per cent winning margin between Tory and Labour in the 1992 general election has been reduced even further with a boundary change that brings in a rock-solid Labour ward. Day's confidence is increasing: "It encourages you to know that 10 people are joining the party every week."

They are joining, however, in the belief that the Labour Party

to him" to "disgusting": 24 of our group responded unfavourably, 19 were neutral and only five positively supported Blair's decision.

When it comes to political strategy, the new members are strikingly flexible and deferential. Some were quite happy to change the name of the party to New Labour if Blair thought it would help win the election. Only eight actually preferred to

polity at London University, is another New Pragmatist: "Blair displays an ambiguity between needing to win power and his responsibility to the left to win votes. But he's pragmatic, a good figure at the right time. Whitehead, a member for 18 months, believes 'not all promises will be delivered'. But he thinks 'Blair will do his best'."

Guy Radcliffe, 41, a house renovator, joined because he felt "I could no longer comment without taking part". Radcliffe, who joined in May after three years abroad, came home to discover "an impressive man leading the Labour Party who worries me a little".

Feeling that Labour lacks well defined policies, wanting radical constitutional change and strong links with the trade unions, are not enough to put Radcliffe off Blair: "This man can win over disenchanted Tories. Sure, he will scare those who think he is too far to the right, but where these people will go I have no idea."

What Blair has done for recruitment is to change his party's losing image. On the doorsteps in Brighton, from students' residences, council estates, private-sector rented flats to up-market Regency and Georgian homes, Labour is

seen as a potential winner. Much of the growth in membership is the product of high polling ratings and high morale. It is easier to persuade people to join a winning organisation. This is reflected in the return of lapsed members, and in the markedly higher retention rates among existing members. Keith Day says in the past about 25 per cent of the membership would lapse every year. Last year it was 5 per cent.

The Blair Effect is indirect, in that he does not necessarily inspire people to join the Labour Party but, because they think he is going to win the next election, the party has become worth joining – and not just in the short term. The new members are not merely fair-weather recruits.

It is even possible that the new recruits are more likely to stand by Blair through the inevitable disappointments of office. Ruby Bosch, who finally joined the party, aged 74, says Blair "seems the person to get rid of this dreadful government – but, while I'm optimistic, there will be problems. The finances may not be available. It is going to be difficult to turn things around."

*Additional reporting by Natasha Roffe*

Setting the stage for new Labour in Brighton: local people joining the party still aspire to traditional socialist values

*Photograph: John Voos*

What Brighton's new members think about

**Tony Blair:**  
"I would stand with pants on my head in the middle of the town square if he thought it would make a difference." *Paul Duffy*

**Tony Blair's decision to send his son to an up-to-date school:**  
"As a teacher I thought it was the decision of a wimp." *Caroline Driver*

**On the rejection of Liz Davies:**  
"If you want to be part of a party, co-operation is essential. The party needs to have a certain identity which will make it electable – it would do the party no favours to have another Michael Foot." *Jean Taylor*  
"She is being totally marginalised – it is disgusting. They should have room for all types of opinion, it should be a broad church. The party has become like the left faction of the Tory party." *Mary Tomlinson*

**On the union block vote:**  
"There should be further reductions – not a complete abandonment of union ideals. But certainly not the old constant stream of Seventies leaders screaming and shouting." *Paul Duffy*

**On the new Clause IV:**  
"I was against it, but, with hindsight, it is a good thing." *Anne Pearson*

**On "New Labour":**  
"Labour is a political party, not a washing-up gimmick. You don't buy it for the quality of its fabric conditioner." *Ted Powers*

**"British culture has changed – it is far more individualistic, the community is far less important. People are yearning for something more – even people who are earning a lot are still hungry for something more – that void could be filled by Labour."** *Graham Anderson*

## Diary

RUTH DUDLEY EDWARDS

Normally in Dublin I stay with convivial friends, but on Friday I was being a judge of the Irish Times literary competition and thought the wise move was to stay in the professed hotel room and keep well out of temptation's way. Unfortunately for my health, as judges and hosts left the restaurant midnight, and I said idly (as I tend to do) "We really should go to a night-club." I found a couple of volunteers. "Take us to a club with music for wrinkles," I cried gaily to the taxi driver. "Rock and roll and so on."

McBride won an assisted place to Brighton and Hove High School, a private girls' school. From a "council estate,

stands for things which Blair has tried to make clear that it no longer does: 45 of the 50 said they wanted "higher public spending, paid for by higher taxes on the better-off". Blair and Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown have reiterated their objective of getting the tax burden down. But for Labour joiners – as for most of the electorate – high tax and high spending are still at the core of what the Labour Party is.

Education also touches core values. Asked about Blair's decision to send his son to a grant-maintained school, "disappointed" was the middle re-

sponse in a range from "it's up to him" to "disgusting". 24 of our group responded unfavourably, 19 were neutral and only five positively supported Blair's decision.

When it comes to political strategy, the new members are strikingly flexible and deferential. Some were quite happy to change the name of the party to New Labour if Blair thought it would help win the election. Only eight actually preferred to

call themselves New Labour – 33 opted for "Labour", three for "Old Labour" and three for "Socialist". "I would be prepared to change the name to New Labour if that would help further their political ascendancy," said Maureen Green, a sympathiser for 40 years.

As for Liz Davies, the rejected candidate for Leeds North-East, if Blair wanted her out, that was good enough for them. Although only 16 felt they knew enough about her to have an opinion, they divided 12-4 in favour of the National Executive's decision.

Dr James Whitehead, 33, a research fellow in social anthro-

polgy at London University, is another New Pragmatist: "Blair displays an ambiguity between needing to win power and his responsibility to the left to win votes. But he's pragmatic, a good figure at the right time. Whitehead, a member for 18 months, believes 'not all promises will be delivered'. But he thinks 'Blair will do his best'."

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*Additional reporting by Natasha Roffe*

From Dublin airport I rang Una, a stalwart of this column, who related a story she had heard on Irish radio by the singer Fintan Furey. She said to tell you to read it aloud slowly, and bear in mind that Chap B was a Corkman and they have trouble with their tee hitches.

On a plane, Furey overheard one of his entourage, A, who was engaged in writing a postcard, asking: "How do you spell 'wattle'?"

"What do you want to write 'wattle' for?"

"Because I have to tell the wife to have six T-shirts ready wattle fit me."

"You don't have to write 'wattle'; observed B reprovingly. "What you should say is 'dattle'."

Were I the worzing type, I'd have been alarmed that it was in the *Independent* that the story broke of a brawl in the Crime Writers' Association between what are known as the cosy and hard-boiled schools, for I am a member of the CWA Committee and therefore a likely mole.

Fortunately, because of the nature of their occupation, my colleagues instantly realised that since I was the obvious suspect, I must be innocent.

Some of you will remember that the row began because in the dead of night Chap B overheard the Baroness (PD) James telling the World Service that "in the pits of the worst possible inner-city area... you don't get moral choice".

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Big trouble with trains

A contribution to the Great Conversations of our Time department comes from my friend Bert, who made the mistake of ringing railway inquiries in Newcastle to ask for train times from Darlington to Brighton. Having been asked what train he wanted to travel on, he explained that he wouldn't know that until he knew what time the trains left Darlington. His interlocutor

responded that she couldn't tell him any train times until she knew on which train he wanted to travel.

"I explained to her that my reason for ringing train timetable inquiries was to find out what time the trains ran. This did not help. She insisted that she could not tell me the time of the train until I told her the time of the train that I wanted to travel on. So I made a guess and said 'mid-morning'."

"What time is mid-morning?" she asked.

"Ten o'clock," I said.

"The 10 o'clock leaves Darlington at 9.58," she replied.

"Is it me?"

Several of you are bleating about the low quality of some limericks and the need to move on to a new verse form: John Parkes even sent me *The Lure of the Limerick* in the hope that it would act as aversion therapy, so I'm trying to break away.

However, having won my heart with "Dear Ruth, may I please come and play in your gang?", Pat Gould ensured I'd publish his Ganesh verse:

*The Pachyderm God without guile  
Is not – I declare – "milkophile";  
The Elephant Frolic  
Is pure Lactoholic –  
That's surely the classical style?*

Nor can I forsake limericks without offering you AJ Godden's suggestion for the promotion of "amicable Eurosentrism" through a Eurolimerick competition. Here is his model, about a resourceful lady from Ravenna coping with a shortage of men:

*Le donne di vecchia Ravenna  
Die sagen wir brauchen keine Männer  
On fait tous pour sol-mêmes  
Und es gibt kein Problem  
Except for the following generation*

To get you started, he suggests you fill in the lines between "Una bella ragazza di Galà/ Had a torrid affair with a sailor" and the last line, "Wie war denn das für ein Fehler?"

To your dictionaries! There will be a prize, though I can't yet think what.

worry

about your company technology



but don't worry about your company healthcare

These days, it only takes a matter of months for your business to look out of date.

At least choose healthcare that's always setting the trend.

On-going investment in our CustomHealth computer system keeps us one jump ahead of the industry. It enables us to offer the fastest, most efficient administration – even tailor schemes

and documentation to suit the larger company.

And our dedicated service – rated top in our recent Gallup poll – will never go out of fashion.

**Guardian Health**

# INDEPENDENT

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## Valencia's message to Brighton

**B**ritain's political parties, not to mention its bemused voters, may wish that the tortuous issue of a single European currency would simply go away. Until this weekend that outcome seemed possible. Amid German fears of losing the mark's stability, French difficulties in meeting the requirements of monetary union and British Euro-scepticism, time travel à la Stephen Hawking might seem as likely as sterling's disappearance.

But the weekend meeting of EU finance ministers in Valencia altered the political almanac. It revealed a dogged if perhaps unrealistic determination to create a single currency by 1999. Kenneth Clarke made it absolutely clear that Britain, unlike many other EU nations, will be purged of inflation and public debt, and so economics would not disqualify it from joining a multinational currency.

In short, as soon as 1998, a decision could be needed on whether Britain should combine with a rump of its European partners, probably Germany, France and the Benelux countries, in forming a single currency.

That may horrify John Major: the Conservatives seem unlikely to be able to deliver monetary union. Even if Mr Major favoured the policy, it would split his party just as surely as did the 1846 reform of the Corn Laws. This may explain why Mr Major has focused recently on discussing future relations between EU members inside and outside a Eurocurrency bloc.

What about Labour? As the party's conference opens today in Brighton, polls suggest that Tony Blair is the politician most likely to be prime minister in 1998. During his first year at No 10 he may have to decide whether to seal the pound's demise.

## Prolonging the imperial anguish

**T**he Sunday afternoon pint of shandy in the local pub was short lived. Permitted at last by the relaxation of the licensing laws in August, it was banned again by metrification yesterday. This time the problem is not the alcohol content of shandy, but the fact that it contains lemonade, and so, unlike "traditional" beer, cannot be sold in a pint measure. Sounds absurd, but apart from the odd irritation, most people will hardly have noticed that Britain just stepped up a gear in its transition from imperial to metric measures.

Pounds and ounces are out. Grams and kilos are in. Products must be labelled in metric. They can have imperial labels too, and they don't actually have to change the size of the product they package. So a pound of cheese is fine so long as the label says 454g. Loose food products are still exempt, so are measures that describe a product and so are deeply embedded within our culture: the pint of beer in the pub, the pint of milk on the doorstep, and the 16-inch shirt collar. Eighty per cent of grocery goods already comply with the regulations, so it's hard to see why anyone would complain, other than the Imperial Metrics Preservation Society.

Yet the Federation of Small Businesses and several national newspapers are up in arms. They claim the changes are confusing, unnecessary and costly for retailers. At worst, metrification represents a further loss of British sovereignty in the face of homogenising babble from Brussels bureaucrats. But Eurosceptic passion is aiming at completely the wrong target. The European market is not the only reason for Britain making the change. Met-

ric is easier to use. There are a thousand grams to the kilo, a hundred pence to the pound and 10 fingers to the person.

So why not have both systems of measurement running in tandem? Let those who need familiarity stick with the pounds and ounces they can visualise, and those who need to do lots of adding up use the maths-friendly milligrams, grams, and kilos. Then if the metric measures win in an open competition, no one can complain. The trouble is, that means the worst of both worlds. Confused shoppers can't work out if packaged tomatoes at £1.60 for 750g are better value than the loose cherry variety at 80p/lb. The point about standard weights and measures is to make sure that the marketplace is fair and everyone knows how much they are buying and selling. The most sensible objection to changing from a familiar to a new measuring system is that in the confusion of the conversion, customers are easily conned – but that's all the more reason to get it over and done with, so we can all get used to the new units.

Purlongs, acres, cubits, and stone have all been around a long time. There are 20 fluid ounces in a pint, two pints in a quart, four quarts in a gallon, two gallons in a peck, four pecks in a bushel and 8 bushels in a quarter. There is a strange beauty about such myriad and complex numbers and patterns developed with quirks and hiccups through the centuries. Even so, the real test of a system of weights and measures is its ease of use, not its depth of culture and tradition. No matter how aesthetically pleasing the sixpence, few would wish to return now to pounds, shillings and pence.

ANOTHER VIEW Angus Deayton

## Not a penny off our aid

**C**omic Relief, as well as Oxfam, Save the Children and more than 100 other aid organisations are on particularly nasty tenterhooks this week. If what we're told is true, there's an extremely current attempt to slash the overseas aid budget in a way that could effectively almost halve the direct help the Government sends to the poorest people in the world.

We beg the Government on bended knees oot to make any reduction *at all* to this budget come November. I'm actually prostrate as I write this. We would hate to see our tax cuts financed like this and we suspect most people in Britain would feel the same. Ten years ago, at the time of Live Aid, there was an extraordinary unity of emotion over the Ethiopian famine, huge outrage that Western governments had been part of letting such a thing happen. It couldn't have been clearer that British people felt a responsibility to people struggling to survive in the poor half of the world and wanted their government to show it.

Ten years later during 1995, Comic Relief the public donated £7.5m by telephone – double the amount they gave two years before; double the amount donated by telephone to Live Aid. Compassion fatigue? I think not.

Britain, I'm told, has a commitment to the United Nations to increase our overseas aid to 0.7 per cent of the gross national product. As formal commitments go it has turned out to be a bit of

a Will Carling. In 1979 it was 0.51 per cent and now it's only 0.31 per cent. It's less than Germany's. If we're not to turn magma with shame, we should at least keep things as they are. Even that, apparently, will mean adding £100m to the budget – which, incidentally, is less than the cost of widening the M25 between junctions 7 and 10.

Last February Douglas Hurd said:

"The purpose of aid... is not in question. Nor is the moral imperative to use some of our wealth to help others. But in the longer term it is in our own self-interest too."

Somewhat unusually, he's completely right. Major Clarke, Rifkind, Baroness Chalker, Waldegrave presumably know he's right. Let's hope it's not forgotten in the rough and tumble of negotiation.

It's not only aid professionals and a load of loud comedians in loud T-shirts who see the poorest people in the world as silent partners in these Treasury meetings – waiting to see if you're about to let a percentage of their crops die, leave a percentage of their children unvaccinated, a percentage of their water polluted. The British public has stood up for them over and over again with generously good humour and pride. We're pretty sure they'll expect their government to do the same this November.

Angus Deayton is writing on behalf of Comic Relief.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Looking after the welfare of chickens and their pluckers

From Mr Peter Bradnock  
Sir: Your leading article "Does anyone care about chickens?" (28 September) and the photograph and report "Chicken farms inflict pain and disease" in the same edition, are grossly inaccurate.

The welfare issues to which you refer are not problems in British poultry farming today. Nor have they ever been of the magnitude or severity, in particular the incidence of heart disease and leg pain, which you imply. To say that each chicken gets a space that is about a quarter of your broadcast page is highly misleading. Broiler chickens are not reared in cages or otherwise confined. They are free and able to roam around the poultry house. Free-range methods of rearing poultry, which you appear to be advocating, have their own welfare and disease problems which are overcome by conventional housing.

There is no single piece of legislation devoted exclusively to the welfare of rearing broiler chickens, precisely because modern broiler farming methods, in themselves, do not create welfare problems. Nevertheless, chicken welfare is well protected by detailed references in various pieces of legislation governing the rear-

ing, feeding, medication, transport, inspection and slaughter of livestock.

You have pointed out the need for consumers to be properly informed in order to make ethical as well as economical choices. We entirely agree. It is therefore all the more disappointing that the photograph which accompanied your article on the alleged conditions in chicken broiler houses depicted an egg layer house which has nothing to do with the way meat chickens are reared.

Good husbandry, housing, feed, and scrupulous attention to hygiene are the key to good bird health and welfare. British poultry farmers maintain the highest welfare standards and they are proud of their excellent record. Yours faithfully,

PETER BRADNOCK  
Director General  
British Poultry Meat  
Federation  
London, WC1

From Mrs Joan Haggard  
Sir: Your leading article asks "Does anyone care about chickens?" The answer is not nearly enough. It certainly seems that most people do not know, and have not bothered to find out, why the price of poultry is so low compared with other kinds of

meat. Intensive broiler production was introduced in the Fifties and Sixties in response to public demand for cheaper food. Now that the true cost, in terms of extreme animal suffering, has been exposed it is up to the public to demand that the procedure is reversed – or, at least, greatly modified.

Human poultry production may mean using more land (surely better than set-aside) and employing more people which would bring welcome employment to the countryside. And if the cost of a chicken, in actual money, does go up a little, it will not hurt my us to eat slightly less and have a clearer conscience about it.

Yours sincerely,  
JOAN HAGGARD  
Harpden, Hertfordshire  
28 September

From Mr A. J. P. Dalton  
Sir: Your editorial waxes lyrical about the fate of the 700 million chickens slaughtered each year to satiate British appetites.

But there are thousands of poultry workers, often female (mainly chicken and turkey pluckers) – many of whom are members of this union – who frequently suffer from painful Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSI).

There must be better ways to provide both work and food. Animals and humans unite. You have only your suffering to lose! Yours sincerely,

A. J. P. DALTON  
National Health and  
Safety Co-Ordinator  
Transport and General  
Workers' Union  
London, SW1

From Professor Paul Richards  
Sir: The picture of a recently captured young rebel fighter accompanying Karl Maier's story from war-torn Bo ("Boys in arms find peace a trial", 27 September) summed up at a glance the tragedy that has played out in Sierra Leone these past five years. The technique of recruiting underage combatants was introduced into the region by Charles Taylor's rebels in Liberia, but spread to Sierra Leone with Taylor's allies, the Revolutionary United Front.

If we take her welcoming VAT on books alongside the discounting it is alleged we shall shortly be enjoying, her reasoning makes no sense. With VAT at the current rate, her latest book *Slashed Style* published at £20, would jump to £23.50 and no matter whether Asda et al reduced it to £15, it would still incur the same VAT, and the price would go back to £18.30. Whether Greer fans would take the trouble to find an Asda store (assuming they even stocked her book) for the sake of saving all of £1.70 is open to doubt.

Regarding her contention that booksellers make extortionate profits to put her books on the shelves, independent booksellers such as myself are lucky to get 35 per cent discount which at the end of the year results in a net profit that hovers around the 15 per cent mark.

The economics of publishing no longer have connection with our literary heritage, they are City-driven by misguided, short-term considerations. I strongly question Ms Greer's contention that books have virtually had it as a way of storing and transmitting information – has she tried reading the classics on CD ROM? Myself, I find it difficult to hold a computer in bed.

In particular, she claims: "The Oxford presses ride their contributors harder and give them even less editorial support than is available in other publishing houses; their authors are held responsible for all line- and copy-editing and copy-editing".

I am no more starry-eyed about publishers than any other professional writer, but I cannot allow this nonsense to pass unchallenged.

I have written books for several publishers, including the two University Presses in question. Both CUP and OUP offer their authors a level of editorial support that is, in my experience, unrivalled, and this support includes – of course – highly professional content and copy-editing.

Yours faithfully,  
MICHAEL SWAN  
Chilton,  
Oxfordshire  
29 September

If the pleasure of reading a good book is to be denied to future generations, then we are all impoverished and eventually our society will choke on its spiritual materialism.

Yours sincerely,  
BRYAN FORBES  
The Bookshop  
Virginia Water,  
Surrey  
29 September

From Mr Michael Swan  
Sir: In the course of her ill-tempered and confused outburst against publishers, bookshop owners and booksellers Gernainte Greer makes some specific and damning criticisms of the Oxford and Cambridge University Presses.

In particular, she claims: "The Oxford presses ride their contributors harder and give them even less editorial support than is available in other publishing houses; their authors are held responsible for all line- and copy-editing and copy-editing".

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Yours faithfully,  
MICHAEL SWAN  
Chilton,  
Oxfordshire  
29 September

From Ms Vicki Hutchings  
Sir: May I correct a few errors in your article "Board sacked as Statesman's chief steps into the fray" (30 September)?

Philip Jeffrey did not take his decision to appoint himself chairman of the board, and ask the board to resign, because the staff were "on the point of passing a vote of no confidence in the board". After the staff and board had been informed of Mr Jeffrey's decision, it was suggested to the staff that they might like to pass a vote of no confidence in the board. This staff refused to do. Journalists then went on to pass a vote of confidence in their NUJ representative on the board and her confirming board membership.

While Mr Jeffrey is not a director,

### State terrorism in East Timor

From Dr Peter Carey

Sir: The British government's outrage at the European Court's judgment on the Gibraltar killings, and its declared commitment to combating terrorism worldwide, are hard to reconcile with its record of support for state terrorism elsewhere in the world.

Twenty years ago, this year, the former Portuguese colony of East Timor was brutally invaded by the Indonesian military, who have been directly responsible for the death of perhaps as many as a third of the pre-1975 population of 700,000.

Yet, in that same period, Britain has become Indonesia's principal foreign arms supplier, providing a range of sophisticated weapons (including British Aerospace Hawk ground-attack aircraft) which have been used against East Timorese civilians. Training has also been provided in Britain for Indonesian officers from both army and paramilitary (Brimob Mobile Brigade) police units, some of which have subsequently seen service in East Timor and have been responsible for gross human rights abuses.

Following the Indonesian invasion, Britain voted for two Security Council regulations calling for the immediate withdrawal of all Indonesian troops and the holding of a popular referendum on the future of the former Portuguese territory. The fact that to this day neither of these demands have been acceded to by Jakarta is largely the responsibility of Indonesia's Western "friends", like Britain, who have been knowing accomplices in its terror regime. In this day and age, is the only honour left that of thieves?

Yours sincerely

PETER CAREY  
Fellow and Tutor in  
Modern History  
Trinity College, Oxford

### A GP at any age

From Mr F. B. Manley

Sir: You suggest (leading article, "Is young Brian too old to be a doctor?", 27 September) that "the medical profession should realise that it is possible and desirable to teach older dogs new tricks".

My father, the late Dr W. B. Manley, Barrister-at-Law (about 1920), retired in 1945 from 20 years' distinguished practice at the Bar and, aged 60 years, enrolled at St Thomas' Hospital, London, as a medical student. He sailed through every examination and qualified as a medical practitioner five years later at the age of 65. Thereafter he did several locum jobs at Guildford hospitals and also served as ship's doctor on at least two luxury cruises, to South Africa and Australia, until the age of 72.

Yours faithfully,

F. B. MANLEY  
Richmond, Surrey

### Loyalty rewarded

From Mr Maurice O'C. Walsh

Sir: Would it not be fitting to mark Humphrey's return to 10 Downing Street ("Happy returns for Maggie and moige", 27 September) by making him Sir Humphrey?

Yours sincerely,

MAURICE WALSH  
Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire

27 September

# comment

## 'Statesman' staggers from crisis to crisis

While political magazines of the right thrive, why is the voice of the left so often in turmoil?

It is odd, when you think about it, that while the Labour Party is in better shape than ever, and while everything seems to bode well for its prospects in the next election, there is still no decent broad-based magazine for people on the left to read. It's not, after all, primarily a question of money. In the general scale of things, a weekly political magazine should not be that hard either to found or to keep going.

One is not envisaging that elusive beast, the daily paper which would have to the Labour Party the same intimate relationship as the *Telegraph* has to the Tories. One is talking about a political and cultural weekly that would have to new Labour the same relationship as ... as the *New Statesman* had to old Labour. In fact, one is talking about the *New Statesman*.

Last week there was a deal of talk in the press about an attempt by Tony Blair's kitchen cabinet to get control of the moribund *New Statesman*, kick out its editor and replace him with a Blair-controlled stooge. Chief culprit in this story was a PR man called Brian Basham who was said to be in the Blair loop. But Mr Basham tells me this is complete nonsense. He has only met Mr Blair once in his lifetime, and while he does indeed know several Labour figures (the Kinlocks, for instance) he is in no way linked to any Blairite plot.

I also phoned the effective owner of the *New Statesman*, Philip Jeffrey, and asked him whether he thought Mr

Basham was a Blairite Trojan horse, intent on ensuring a loyal, stooge-like magazine. Mr Jeffrey said, in the course of a quite long conversation, that he thought Mr Blair had no interest in the *New Statesman* at all. He said that he would like to improve the *Statesman* to such an extent that Mr Blair would sit up and take notice of it. He also said that if Mr Blair had wanted a Trojan horse on the *New Statesman*, then the obvious candidate would be himself. Mr Jeffrey (a loyal member of Amersham Labour Party), but he had no approaches of any kind from the Blair camp. In fact, he had precious little connection at all with the magazine either.

So this idea that Steve Platt, the magazine's editor, was being forced to resign as part of a general attempt to stifle opposition to new Labour appears to emanate from Mr Platt's circle. It appears to be a spin - a genuine example of a spin - from spin-doctors as yet unidentified.

Mr Platt was indeed being asked to resign, had in fact agreed to resign, and the finance committee of the magazine met last Tuesday to draft a press release to say that he had resigned. The reason for this resignation was that a refinancing scheme was being developed, and that if the magazine was to be refinanced the new investors would expect there to be a new editor. They would expect someone who, the phrase goes, was better box office.

Yesterday, there was to have been

a press conference at Brighton announcing the new deal for the poor old *Staggers and Noggers*. Instead Mr Platt, having been persuaded, or having persuaded himself, that he was being hounded by unsavoury elements from Islington, decided not to resign. Mr Jeffrey learnt that the staff was about to pass a vote of no confidence in the board and decided to demand the resignation of the entire board. Christopher Price, the chairman, resigned, but Mr Basham has yet to do so. The other members have apparently refused to go. But, of course, the refinancing deal appears for the moment to be finished.

I say "for the moment" because Mr Jeffrey, who, as I reported above, was

sweetness itself to me and in all his

references to Mr Blair, gave this paper's correspondent a rather different impression last Friday, saying: "What has happened today is not good news for Tony Blair." Apparently Mr Jeffrey is subject to mood swings. I got his sweetest side. He paid tribute to the enormous effort and sacrifices made by the board members whom he had just instructed to resign.

The situation, as far as I can see, is that Mr Jeffrey, as is his right, has appointed himself chairman of the board, and brought in the accountant Peter Jones to look at the books and to decide whether or not to close the magazine down. Mr Jones has actually been looking at these books, to the best of my knowledge, for the past two decades. Perhaps he will come up with something this time. Perhaps not. Meanwhile he has the defiantly unsigned former members of the board to deal with.

The boards of the *New Statesman* have a not very happy history. In 1978, when I was one of the candidates for editorship, the paper owned its building in Lincoln's Inn Fields, had money in the bank and made, as a company, an operating profit. All the candidates who made proposals within the fairly cautious old parameters were turned down in favour of an expansionist scheme intended to turn the *Statesman* into a news magazine on the lines of, say, *Der Spiegel*. The scheme was ballyhoo, went off at half-cock and the capital was soon used up.

In 1990 the magazine faced bank-

ruptcy but was saved in part by the investments made by two staff members. In one week, in January 1992, the Prime Minister and his coterie sued the magazine and its distributors for libel, the distributors settled their side and under the terms of their contract passed on to the magazine the bill for £250,000, about which it could do nothing. (The magazine's own part in the legal action was settled on much more modest terms.)

When it started going under again in 1993, there was interest from the quarter of one Derek Coombs, a former Tory MP, who is now the biggest single shareholder in *Prospect*, the new political magazine that was launched last week. The board split between supporters of Mr Coombs, who seemed OK except for having been a Tory, and Mr Jeffrey, who was eccentric but was at least Labour. Mr Jeffrey was chosen by one vote, and has since (with his wife) put the best part of £600,000 into the company. He owns 49 per cent, Mr Platt owns 15 per cent. Hence the black vote.

If Mr Jeffrey intends to put the paper in the hands of the receivers, he may well thereby end up delivering it into the hands of his old rival for ownership, Mr Coombs. If Mr Platt digs in, in the name of resistance against Stalino-Blairite stifling of free speech, he may find his position overrun by an old fox. Could someone make either of these fine individuals see sense?

## To the future, at warp speed

Could time travel come true? Stephen Baxter reports

*Long ago I had a vague inkling of a machine ... that shall travel indifferently in any direction of Space and Time.*

From *The Time Machine*

by HG Wells

Of all the classic subjects of science fiction, perhaps the most out of reach - and therefore the most stimulating for authors, readers and scientists alike - is time travel.

The most prominent opponent of time travel ideas has been Stephen Hawking. But now Professor Hawking has started to concede the possibility, in his foreword to a new book on the science of *Star Trek*.

Hawking makes the point that there is a "two-way trade between science fiction and science". This has worked in space flight, such as Tsolkovsky, Oberth and Ley, which led directly to Werner von Braun's Apollo triumph in the 1960s.

But could this be true of time travel? A century after publication of *The Time Machine*, what does modern science fiction - and science - tell us of the possibilities of time travel?

And now, as the physicist devise almost-plausible time machines, they, too, must wrestle with the possibility of granny-strangling causal loops. This has been Hawking's main sticking point, in fact.

But the small print of the laws of physics does contain loopholes. Quantum physics allows the possibility of multiple universes; the idea is that, rather than creating a paradox within an individual history, a new world-line is created each time history is adjusted. Thorne and his co-workers have documented a remarkable series of thought experiments involving billiard balls colliding with themselves after passing through time-spanning wormholes.

We are a long way away from developing a viable prototype time machine. Still, any good SF author knows that anything not outlawed by the laws of physics is only a matter of engineering. And in the parallel development of fictional and scientific time travel ideas, we can see that the feedback loops between science and SF are still working. It would be wonderful to suppose that, among the readers of *The Time Machine*, or Gribble or Hawking - or even my own books - there will be somewhere the Tsolkovsky of time travel... Or even the von Braun

construction projects, doesn't match up to our archetypes dream of time cars.

In 1949 Kurt Gödel - who had already, at 25, proved the incompleteness of mathematics - described a rotating universe so distorted by its own spin that it contained paths looping into the past. In such a universe a Tardis could be built.

And, oddly, Wells himself, writing 50 years earlier, described "spinning" as an aspect of time travel: "I seemed to see a ghostly, indistinct figure sitting in a whirling mass of black and brass" (*The Time Machine*). Unfortunately, there is no evidence that our own universe is rotating.

The idea of time-paradoxes developed in SF soon after Wells. If I go back in time and shoot my grandmother, I will not be born, and therefore could not go back and...

The acme of time-paradox stories is Robert Heinlein's *You Zombies* (1959), in which, thanks to a time machine and a sex change, a person acts as his/her own father and mother. In Isaac Asimov's *The End of Eternity* (1955), time police protect a "pure" version of history.

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The writer is author of *The Time Ships*, HarperCollins, £4.99.

Miles Kington is on holiday.

Black alienation is erupting in the US. But there could be a positive outcome, says Rupert Cornwell

## After OJ, a black president?



Colin Powell; OJ Simpson; Louis Farrakhan: race, the rawest nerve of American society, has again been exposed, and healing will be required

Mercifully, it is all but over. Johnnie Cochran, Marcia Clark, Judge Ito and the rest of them will no longer hold millions of American lives in thrall. Armies of couch-potato lawyers will disperse, CNN must find new programming schedules. And finally the only heroes of this wretched saga, the 12 jurors and two alternates, will shortly be able to resume a normal existence after nine months of virtual imprisonment. But for America's greater, more perilous ordeal may only be starting. As the trial of the Century winds down, in the dock is not merely OJ Simpson, but race relations in America at the end of the 20th century.

A month or two ago, for whites at least, the connection scarcely arose. Simpson was black, yes, but the colour of his skin was irrelevant. He had made his way in a white world, had white friends, even a white wife. His trial, whites assured themselves, was not about America's oldest, most intractable problem, but those more comfortable issues of money, celebrity, and whether some of the priciest lawyers in the land could extricate a former sporting superstar from an apparently open-and-shut double-murder rap. Then came Mark Fuhrman.

After his perfidy, his proven racism, and his taped bragging that the Los Angeles police routinely framed black suspects, even whites convinced by the seemingly irrefutable DNA evidence were no longer sure. For blacks, of course, Fuhrman was confirmation of what they always knew, that for them "justice" was a joke. The disproportionate numbers of blacks in America's prisons, the Rodney King case, now OJ - illustrate all of the America described by Cochran to the annual

Congressional Black Caucus dinner in Washington last weekend, a country of "barbed wire from sea to shining sea".

Whites, not blacks, were shocked by Fuhrman. Whites, decent and god-fearing Caucasian Americans, were appalled that even after the Rodney King case law enforcement in LA might be little more than systematic racism. Now they understood why, from the moment it started, blacks had been as convinced of Simpson's innocence as they themselves were of his guilt. An ABC News poll on Thursday, showing a 77 to 18 presumption of guilt among whites and an almost exactly opposite figure among blacks, was no

mitment of black males to family, work and self-advancement and loosen the stereotypes of violence, sexual irresponsibility, and despair which shackle black America. But what if, at that very moment, a jury 3,000 miles away in Los Angeles proves the expert predictions wrong and "white justice" nabs OJ?

Combustibles enough are already in place - even if Simpson were to this day living in domestic bliss, plugging Hertz rental cars and doing the commentary for televised football games. Black unity may be the order of the day, but the prime mover remains Farrakhan. His image may have softened of late. But for whites (and not a few blacks) he remains a divisive and threatening figure, an emblem of militancy, anti-Semitism and intolerance.

For grievances, however, Farrakhan need look no further than the Capitol Hill which overlooks the Mall where they will gather. Blacks overwhelmingly vote Democrat. But a Republican Congress is seeking deep cuts in welfare, the Medicaid scheme for the poor, and a host of other smaller programmes - all part of America's social safety net, whose reduction will hit blacks especially hard. A block behind the Capitol, the Supreme Court looks poised to strike down electoral districts artificially drawn to send minority representatives to Washington. If it does, the seats of up to half the 38-strong Black Caucus in Congress will be at risk.

And then there is affirmative action, assailed by Republican presidential contenders and undermined by this summer's Supreme Court ruling overturning laws that helped minority-owned firms to win government contracts. Even desegregated school

busing, that huge symbolic blow for racial equality, is being chipped at across the country. In short, a new and mean-spirited white Republican establishment seems bent on tearing up the achievements of 30 years of struggle for civil rights. And, say social Darwinians, why not? After all, blacks have had preferential treatment long enough; if they still cannot get ahead, then the fault must be largely theirs. Some middle-class and conservative blacks might agree; but not, surely, the vast majority of those who will flock to Farrakhan's banner on 16 October.

And yet, amid the alienation and division, an extraordinary phenomenon is

Farrakhan's image may have softened, but for whites he remains an emblem of intolerance

at work. If an election were held tomorrow, Americans might very well elect a black man to their country's highest office. Now General Colin Powell's trial for the presidential campaign of 1996 are of course a mystery. The reasons for his popularity, however, are not. And that this popularity should rise just as the Simpson melodrama approaches its climax is entirely logical.

Thus far, Powellmania is a white phenomenon.

Certainly blacks are proud of the general's achievements and well-disposed to his urging to moderation, decency and common sense. As yet, however, they are uninclined to see him as a saviour. The

Black Caucus dinner last weekend spoke volumes on the subject. It was General Powell who was officially honoured that evening - but the man who stole the show was Johnnie Cochran, expounding the "higher reason" of justice and civil rights involved in the Simpson case.

From there it was but a short step to the frightening passions of this past week. And who knows what their wider impact might be in the weeks and months ahead. Small wonder President Clinton's concern that the trial not become a symbol of America's racial divisions. But it may be too late. Who could not take emotional sides after listening on live television to OJ's lead lawyer describing the white Mark Fuhrman as a genocidal monster skin to Hitler - or the father of the murdered Ronald Goldman vent his fury at the "sick" and "disturbing" Cochran for shamelessly playing the race card to save a killer?

With the final verdict tempers may cool, especially if as is widely expected, the predominantly black jury fails to convict. Even a hung jury, reckoned the most probable outcome, would buy time. But race, the rawest nerve of American society, has again been exposed, and healing will be required. Johnnie Cochran turned a millionaire black who moved in a privileged, affluent white world into an improbable martyr. Now, to bind its wounds, America may look to another black millionaire and honorary white, this one a former soldier on a tour book. Thus the Simpson case - a criminal, social and media extravaganza without equal in US history - might be midwife to another unparalleled event: a black president in the Oval Office.

by Tony Reeve and Steve Way



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## obituaries/gazette

# Susan Fleetwood

Susan Fleetwood was an actor's actor. Or maybe a director's. At any rate hers was the kind of dramatic talent which thrived in the subsidised sector; and since that sector has always been run by directors they - rather than the players - have become the stars of the serious stage in Britain. You have only to glance at the billing. The days when an impresario built an actor into a star - a name to draw the public - have long gone, at least on the classical stage. (On television, of course, it is another story and another kind of acting.)

Susan Fleetwood was born in 1944, the daughter of an Army officer and the sister of Mick Fleetwood, one of the founders of the rock band Fleetwood Mac. There was never an actress of more obvious dedication to the classics. Even at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art it was Shakespeare, on a tour of Arizona in 1964, when she played Rosalind and Lady Macbeth. Later that year it was Lady Percy in *Henry IV: Part One* at the Everyman, Liverpool, where a group of young directors such as Terry Hands (a star-to-be with Peter Hall's Royal Shakespeare Company) and Peter James were staging ancient and modern classics - Wilde, Goldoni, O'Neill, Osborne and Fernando Arrabal - in their radical way.

Then came a decade with the RSC, interrupted by stints with two other subsidised classical companies, the Prospect Theatre company and the Cambridge Theatre company. With them, Fleetwood played opposite another up-and-coming classicist, Ian McKellen. In *The Recruiting Officer* she strutted charmingly about as Silvia, the girl who gets her man when ordered by her father to serve as

a soldier under the command of her beloved, unsuspecting Captain Plume, played by McKellen. Coming only eight years after Maggie Smith's success in the same part, the performance revealed another truly promising actress. Or was it just her height which did the trick? To be "uncommon tall" is not always an asset to an actress.

Fleetwood also toured Europe as Ophelia to McKellen's Hamlet, ending up in the West End (Cambridge Theatre, 1971) before returning to the RSC with which her appearances as Audrey in *As You Like It*, and Marina and Thaisa (mother and daughter), in *Pericles* (Ian Richardson played the title-role), had established her as an actress to watch. She took over from Judi Dench as Portia to Emrys James' Shylock, headed the Chorus somewhat sensationally, to the point of simulated orgasm, in Terry Hands' production of *Murder In The Cathedral*, and loomed manfully about in John Arden's four-hour epic *The Island Of The Mighty* at the Aldwych.

Sometimes an actress is ill-served both by writers and directors; and Fleetwood had to endure such setbacks; and accept that she had a way - a warm personality, lovely voice, sunny demeanour - of rising from the whims of her directors. In *The Taming Of The Shrew* (1973) she again and again held her own as Katharina to Alan Bates' simpering Paduan, in a production which went all out for gags and knockabout "fun" at the expense of character.

When Peter Hall took over the National Theatre from the ailing Laurence Olivier in 1973, Fleetwood played opposite another up-and-coming classicist, Ian McKellen. In *The Recruiting Officer* she strutted charmingly about as Silvia, the girl who gets her man when ordered by her father to serve as

classical stage. In an otherwise all-Irish production of *The Playboy Of The Western World* (1975) her Pegeen Mike won general approval; and if her Ophelia to Albert Finney's Hamlet did not have us all in tears it was full of colour, variety, warmth, without ever being sentimental. Warm again was her touch as the old writer's nurse in Osborne's *Watch It Come Down* - a performance full of charitable emotion - but her gifts were often wasted in new plays.

After her success in Syngue came an affecting Nora in O'Casey's *The Plough And The Stars* (again surrounded by an all-Irish cast) and a return to Chekhov in *The Cherry Orchard* (1978) as an unusually good-humoured Varja in Hall's production of Michael Frayn's translation; and she was suitably woeful as Ismene in Edward Bond's neo-Greek epic *The Woman: Scenes Of War And Freedom* (1978, Olivier).

Back with the RSC in 1980 she came into her own - rather improbably perhaps - as Rosalind in Terry Hands' staging of *As You Like It*. She brought such intensity of joy to her feelings for Orlando, such a natural desire to rejoice in her luck, that it touched the heart. Hers was a Rosalind of such a breathless coming-on disposition that as Ganymede, Orlando's tutor in the art of courtship, she seemed to throw to the winds all pretence of being a boy as she laid her hands on the papil.

Six seasons later, for the first time in a career which had hitherto passed the West End, she found herself playing opposite Paul Scofield in *Im Not Rappaport* (Apollo), a charming if sentimental Broadway study of two New York octogenarians, in which she

was driven to destruction by her father's precarious existence among the muggers and junkies; but that was orthodox commercial casting.

In 1988, back at the National, Fleetwood brought us all up with a jolt as Laura in Osborne's searing version of Strindberg's *The Father* (Cottesloe). Flat-voiced, ashen-faced, stooping, staring, when she laughed at her tormented husband she sent a chill round the house. Who knows what riches she might have brought out in the theatre had that side of her talent been cultivated in, say, Ibsen, the only other great author who seems never to have come her way?

Of course she had a fine reputation on television. Some might call it stardom. It came in such programmes as *The Buddha Of Suburbia* (1993), *Chandler And Co* (in which she played the policewoman Kate Phillips), and the BBC film of Jane Austen's *Persuasion* (1995).

Her films included *Heav And Dust* (1982), *Tarkovsky's The Sacrifice* (1985), *White Mischief* (1987) and *The Krays* (1990); but such Rosalinds, Lauras and Katharinases are few and far between.

Adam Benedict

Susan Fleetwood once almost boasted to me that she never read anything, writes Peter Eyre. She did not want to advertise the fact, but she had a mild form of dyslexia, and the lines were carefully coloured in her scripts to make it easier for her eyes to focus.

She was momentarily out of work when we discussed her disinclination to read. I wanted to know how she was filling her time. She told me she kept a script open on a kind of lectern, and every now and then would

stand there, working on a passage and acting out a scene - Medea, perhaps, Cleopatra, Heda Gabler - great roles she had not yet played. I suggested to her that this was a form of reading, but she was insistent: "It's plays, not books." Her

had an almost fanatical

dedication to her work. As with

some of the great actresses of

this century - Eleanor Duse,

Elizabeth Berger, for example

- it was possible to believe that

for her acting was almost a re-

ligious vocation, so deep and

single-minded was her involve-

ment. But the Tragic Muse had

a rival, as she was also blessed with an astonishing gift for comedy. She was a brilliant mimic with an anarchic sense of the absurd in life, and in some of her most memorable perfor-

mances displayed this skill -

"it's plays, not books."

She had an almost fanatical

dedication to her work. As with

some of the great actresses of

this century - Eleanor Duse,

Elizabeth Berger, for example

- it was possible to believe that

for her acting was almost a re-

ligious vocation, so deep and

single-minded was her involve-

ment. But the Tragic Muse had

she particularly admired, her

were rare, even non-existent,

and usually indirect. In a letter

she wrote to me a few weeks

ago, from her mother's house,

she asked me not to worry

about her. However, she had a

confession to make. She had actu-

ally read a book - Isabel Al-

lende's *The House Of The*

*Spirits* - and enjoyed it. "Perhaps

I'll get a real taste for it,"

she wrote, "and completely

overcome my dyslexia."

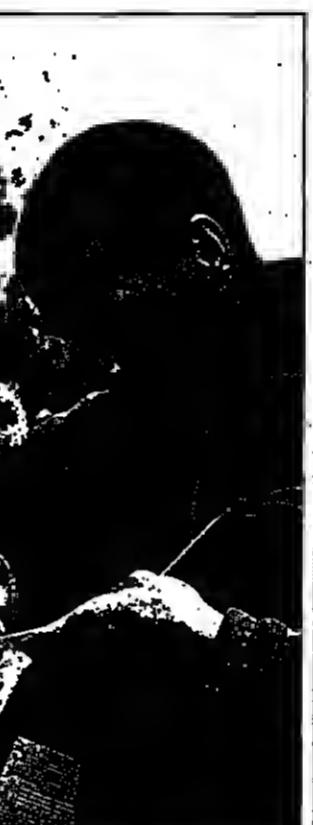
Susan Maureen Fleetwood, ac-

tress; born St Andrews 21 Sep-

tember 1944; died Salisbury 29

September 1995.

References to her long illness



Acting treated almost as a religious vocation: Fleetwood as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, RSC, 1990. Photograph: Stuart Morris

## Albert Johannesson

Albert Johannesson was the first black footballer to achieve true prominence in the English professional game. Others before him, such as Roy Brown, of Stoke City, and Doncaster Rover Charlie Williams (who became better known as a comedian), enjoyed worthy careers just after the Second World War, but the personable South African's dashing exploits with Leeds United in the 1960s gave him a far higher public profile.

Johannesson was a left winger whose explosive pace, bewitching sideslip and knack of scoring goals made him one of the most effective early contributors to the revival at Elland Road inspired by Don Revie.

Having been recommended to the then Second Division club by a teacher in his home town of Johannesburg, the 21-year-old Johannesson impressed on a three-month trial with Leeds, and then became one of Revie's first signings in April 1961. Conditioned by a life of rigid apartheid, Johannesson was understandably unsure of himself initially, not even knowing if he was allowed to join his white colleagues in the team bath. They responded by stripping him of his kit and plunging him in a rough-and-ready welcome but a warm one which he appreciated.

Thereafter, Johannesson settled well both on and off the pitch, winning promotion to the senior side, and became a favourite with the Elland Road fans. They like the vast majority of other supporters, judged him purely on his merits as a



Johannesson meeting Leeds fans on the eve of the 1966 FA Cup Final

Photograph: George Greenwell

BIRTHS  
EVAN: On 23 September, to Sean and Elizabeth (Woodman), a daughter, Emma Christine. With special thanks to all at PRH, Haywards Heath, and Crowley SCBU.

DEATHS  
HENNESSY: On 25 September 1995, Shamus Michael Hennessy, of Trelawny, Two Mile Ash, Milton Keynes, passed away peacefully at home, aged 88 years. The funeral is to take place on 1 October, 11am, 5 October 1995, at Croydon Crematorium, Denmark Way, Croydon, Surrey. Interment follows at Trelawny Cemetery, Milton Keynes MK15 9AB. Inquiries please to J S Cowley & Sons, Funeral Directors, telephone 01908 565333.

HOULDRIDGE: On 27 September, Kenneth Harry Houldridge (priest), aged 85, died. A memorial service will be held on 1 November at 11am at St Edmund's Church, Southampton. A Service of Thanksgiving will be held on Friday 6 October at 2.15pm. Family flowers only. No let-up, please. Donations, if desired, to Christian Aid or Right Livelihood, to 100 St. Paul's, London EC4M 8AF, or to the Royal British Legion, 100 St. Paul's, London EC4M 8AF, or to the Royal British Legion, 100 St. Paul's, London EC4M 8AF.

BIRTHDAYS  
Mr Trevor Brooking, footballer, 47; Dr William Crumford, clinical psychiatrist, 75; Lord Davies, chairman of Welsh National Opera, 55; Sir Brian Dilley, a former Lord Justice of Appeal, 70; Professor Sir Robin Donaldson, chemist, Retired, 67; Miss Anne Fawcett, broadcaster, 52; Mr Peter Franklin, pianist, 60; Mr Peter Hobson, headmaster, Charterhouse School, 51; Civil Geoffrey Luttrell, former Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, 66; Mr Don McLaren, folk singer, 50; Mrs Jan Morris, author, 60; Mr James Porter, former director-general, Commonwealth Institute, 67;

footballer, and he stood out as one of the few entertainers in an essentially dour team. Incidents of racism were extremely rare, though on one occasion he complained that an Everton defender, whom he didn't name, had called him a "black bastard" during the heat of a particularly bitter match. Revie's advice was to "call him a white bastard back."

Johannesson distinguished himself in the latter stages of Leeds's successful battle against relegation in 1961-62, then became firmly established in the side and was the joint top scorer with 13 League goals as they won the Second Division championship two years later.

He was especially effective in tandem with the club's skipper, Bobby Collins. As the effervescent little Scottish schemer put it: "Albert could fly and I could put the ball on the spot for him. When he was in his stride there weren't many who could catch him."

Johannesson's performing peak came, perhaps, in 1964-65, when the newly promoted Leeds were pipped for the title only on goal average by Manchester United, then lost the FA Cup Final to Liverpool. In retrospect, that Wembley defeat - Johannesson was the first black player to appear in a final, but made disappointingly little impact - marked something of a watershed in his career. It was as though his self-belief, always rather fragile, had taken a severe knock and he was never quite the same again.

Soon after that he lost his

place to the England international Mike O'Grady, and then became increasingly peripheral through a combination of niggling injuries and the rise of the brilliant Eddie Gray. Accordingly, Johannesson was no more than a hit player as Revie's Leeds matured into a mighty footballing force and it was no surprise when he left to join York City, of the Fourth Division, in the summer of 1970. Though in his 31st year, he had much to offer the Minster men

and in his one full season at Bootham Crescent, he helped them gain promotion. He continued to be dogged by fitness problems, however, and retired in 1971.

In the years that followed, Johannesson fell on hard times and his health suffered as he became dependent on alcohol. A gentle fellow, he had been popular with his team-mates, some of whom attempted to help him over his difficulties.

Poignantly, though, he died

alone in a tiny council flat in a Leeds tower block, aged only 55, and had reportedly been dead for several days before his body was discovered. It was a pitiful end for a man who, in his pomp, had thrilled huge crowds and earned their affection.

Ivan Ponting

In 1945 a press officer of the British Military Government asked the Hamburg minister responsible for the city's housing to set up a daily paper. The person concerned was Gerd Bucerius, a lawyer by profession. He presented a plan which the British adopted and they, not he, started to publish the highly successful *Die Zeit*. As a consolation prize the British gave Bucerius a licence to publish a weekly, *Die Zeit*. Publication began on 21 February 1946.

In terms of prestige the weekly came to overshadow the daily. Together with *Der Spiegel*, Bucerius's publication has remained the most influential German weekly. Yet the development of *Die Zeit* was not without difficulties. Although Germans were excited about new ideas in politics, the arts and economics, and were desperate for contributions which helped them to understand the shameful years of Hitlerism, the financing of such a project was not easy. In the 1950s the paper suffered severe financial losses.

Bucerius had bought 50 per cent of the shares in the rival weekly *Stern*, which was a great financial success. *Stern* was glossy, *Die Zeit* was not; *Stern* mixed fashion, crime, sex, scandal, even cockneys, with serious political articles. Happily all three weeklies survived. *Die Zeit* achieved profitability in the second half of the 1970s. In its early years the paper was regarded as independent but rather conservative; by the end of the 1960s it was on the liberal wing of the Bonn establishment.

Where the applicant for leave to appeal on paper or in an oral hearing, the applicant should not burden the court with documents not relevant to the application. The Civil Appeals Office sets out the court's requirements concerning bundles.

Where the applicant is legally aided and the single Lord Justice has refused leave on paper, the applicant's solicitor must send to the relevant legal aid office a copy of the single Lord Justice's Order.

On a paper application applicants must provide the single Lord Justice with a clear and succinct summary of the grounds unless they are plain in the notice of appeal. If the single Lord Justice grants leave or directs an oral hearing, directions may given on the time for oral argument and the lodging and service of skeleton arguments.

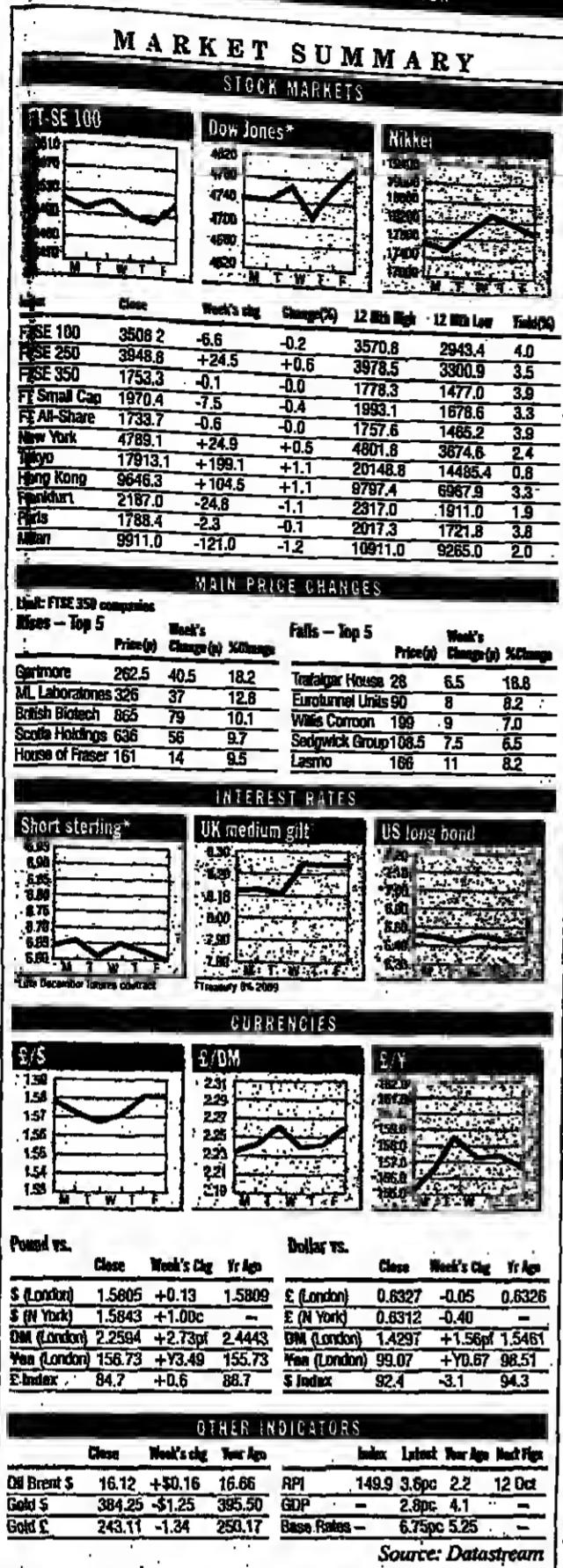
The practice direction supercedes Practice Directions (1983) 1 All ER 891; [1989] 1 WLR 281; [1990] 2 All ER 318; [1990] 1 WLR 794; [1987] 3 All ER 454; [1987] 1 WLR 1422 (so far as it deals with time estimates and listing); [1990] 2 All ER 1024; [1990] 1 WLR 1126 (handed down judgments in lieu of transcripts); [1986] 3 All ER 630; [1986] 1 WLR 1318 (which deals with appeal bundles). The practice direction came into force on 4 September 1995.

In applications to the Court

to assist litigants in person two leaflets have been prepared by the Civil Appeals Office.

Part II of the practice direction sets out revised requirements concerning the form and content of appeal bundles. Transcripts lodged must be official copies provided by the shorthand-writer or transcriber. Where the judge handed down judgment, photocopies of that handed-down judgment, signed by the judge, can be lodged for an appeal in lieu of the official transcript. Where an ex tempore judgment was given, the appellant's solicitor should make arrangements for the note of judgment to be prepared and agreed with the respondent and then submitted to the judge as soon as

CITY & BUSINESS EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER



#### IN BRIEF

##### BT denies overcharging reports

BT denied reports over the weekend that it is charging customers £100 a year for calls that are not completed because the numbers are engaged, saying that after three years of research it had found "no evidence" of overcharging. The telecom giant also dismissed accusations that it had told its managers to "fob off" customers who complain of such charges. BT said there had been a significant increase in complaints following the introduction of fully itemised bills a year ago. But in the vast majority of "short-call" cases the caller had either heard a fax tone and rung off or had hung up just as the person was answering.

##### London worst for business failures

The number of larger companies going bust in London increased by more than a third in the first nine months of the year, while every other region in Britain enjoyed a fall in business failures. Dunn & Bradstreet, the business information company, said that including small business bankruptcies the capital's failure rate had gone up by nearly a fifth compared to a nation-wide decrease of 8.7 per cent. Overall, the number of liquidations in Britain rose 4.6 per cent in the first nine months, while smaller business busts fell by 16.4 per cent.

##### KPMG to vote on limited liability

KPMG, Britain's second-largest accountancy firm, is tomorrow expected to announce that it is turning its audit division into a limited-liability company in order to give itself greater protection against the growing numbers of negligence claims. The move is designed to put the audit partners on the same sort of footing as company directors. Coopers & Lybrand, Britain's largest accountancy firm, and other leading practices, such as Price Waterhouse & Ernest & Young, are known to be investigating the issue. Some outsiders say the result of the vote by KPMG's 600 UK partners at London's Savoy Hotel is "too close to call".

##### Pubmaster buys Whitbread pubs

Pubmaster, the UK's leading independent pub operator with over 1,700 outlets, has bought 137 pubs from Whitbread for £12.25m. The sites are mainly in the North-west, the West Country and Kent, and had previously been leased from Whitbread as part of a deal agreed between the two companies in June 1992. Four weeks ago Pubmaster paid £2.5m for amusement machine operator Inn Style Leisure, which runs machines in 2,000 pubs.

##### CBI looks to middle

The Confederation of British Industry today will launch what it claims is the first organisation to represent Britain's small and medium-sized companies. The Small and Medium Enterprise Council will replace the 25-year-old Smaller Firms Council. John Parson, chairman of the new council, said: "While we endorse the need to stimulate a thriving start-up and micro business sector, what we do is to encourage the Government to put into place policies that help the growth of a 'Mittelstand' sector, similar to that already in place in Germany."

##### Rhone-Poulenc to raise Fisons bid

Rhone-Poulenc Rorer is expected to raise its bid for UK drugs group Fisons by around 20p a share before Friday's deadline for a revised offer, according to sources close to the US pharmaceuticals company. In August, Rhone-Poulenc launched a bid at 240p per share in cash, valuing Fisons at £1.7bn. Lehman Brothers and J O Hambro Magan are handling the bid.

##### Cortworth plans float

Cortworth, the specialist engineering group, is planning to float on the London Stock Exchange this autumn. Samuel Montagu is sponsor, with James Capel as stockbroker. Cortworth was founded in December 1993 via a management buy-out of most of the specialist engineering division of Williams Holdings. Cortworth made a profit of £6.4m last year on turnover of £8.3m.

# business<sup>19</sup>

INDEPENDENT • Monday 2 October 1995

BUSINESS NEWS DESK, tel 0171-293 2548 fax 0171-293 2098

## National Power to bid £2.8bn in cash for Southern Electric

JOHN WILLCOCK  
Financial Correspondent

The carve-up of the electricity industry will gather momentum today, when National Power launches an agreed £2.8bn cash bid for Southern Electric and puts three of its own power stations up for sale. Later in the week, Houston Industries, a Texan utilities group, will rejoin the battle for control of Norweb.

National Power's bid is expected to value Southern, the largest regional electricity company, at around £1,000-2,100m a share, compared to Friday's closing price of 897p.

Two groups are in contention

for National Power's planned £160m power station sell-off: Eastern Group and AES, the energy group. Eastern said yesterday it had "no comment" to make on the speculation".

In another twist, Houston Industries and its partner Central and South West Corporations are planning another bid for Norweb, after their original agreed offer of £1.7bn last week was trumped by North West Water's hostile bid of £1.72bn.

The Texans fear that NWW may be able to increase its 11.7 per cent stake in Norweb if its share price continues to fall.

The two American companies have a combined market

capitalisation of \$10.4bn and have formed a joint venture, Texas Energy Partners, to invest in utilities world-wide. The Texans have said they want to expand into Britain, partly because of the "very attractive" economic environment, while NWW claims it can get big cost savings by rationalising overlaps between its operations and Norweb.

Some power bosses fear that the National Power bid will finally persuade the Government to launch a monopolies inquiry into the industry. The Labour Party conference this week is set to hear strident calls for a full-blown inquiry into the

takeover frenzy gripping the privatised utilities. The sale of three of National Power's largest power stations, as ordered by power regulator Professor Stephen Littlechild, is designed to head off this threat.

Eastern, the Recs bought recently by Hanson, is already buying two power stations for £400m from PowerGeo. AES lost out to Eastern in that battle. Both companies have been asked to submit bids for National Power's stations in the next fortnight. The parties hope to complete the deal by the end of the year.

This will cut National Power's share of the generating market

from 34 per cent to 25 per cent, leaving the number one spot to British Energy, the nuclear group to be sold off next year.

The current tumult in the electricity industry looks set to continue as sources close to the Government indicated that Chancellor Kenneth Clarke is unlikely to copy Labour's idea of a £3bn "windfall tax" on the utility companies.

The prospect of more UK utilities falling into overseas hands is another sensitive political issue. If the Texans are successful, Norweb will become the second British electricity company to be bought by Americans, following the

£1.07bn acquisition of South West Electricity by Southern Electric International. There are continuing rumours in the City that PacifiCorp of the US will counter Scottish Power's Manweb bid.

Six of the Recs privatised in 1990 have been bid for so far, while Manweb has been the only one to face a hostile bid. Other American utilities are expected to enter the ring. The two Texas companies had been talking to Norweb for some time about the UK company joining them in a US power generation project, but the discussions were put on hold after the bid discussions began.

## Falklands oil frontier opens for exploration

HUGH O'SHAUGHNESSY and PETER RODGERS

British Gas, Lasmo and other leading oil and gas companies will this week confirm their interest in one of the most exciting frontier exploration areas to emerge for decades. Tomorrow the government of the Falkland Islands will invite Europe's oil companies to search for oil and natural gas in one of the last - and potentially richest - unexplored regions.

Detailed regulations concerning 19 offshore areas, due to be published in Stanley this week, will give companies the right to exploit reserves for 47 years - and, after negotiation, perhaps longer. The big companies are playing down the area's potential but it is tantalising. In 1975, a team from Birmingham University identified potential oil-bearing sedimentary strata 3.5 km thick and a Foreign Office report has described the offshore areas as "comparable with many areas of the North Sea".

The licensing round - which later this month moves on to Houston, Texas, to attract North American explorers - comes in the wake of a political agreement on maritime boundaries signed by Britain and Argentina at the United Nations last week. Directly after the signing by Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, and his opposite number, Guido Di Tella, there were calls in Buenos Aires for Argentina to tax companies operating in Falklands waters. Argentine nationalists have also condemned the agreement as a sellout to Britain by President Carlos Menem.

Despite the continuing, but much-diminished, political fragility stemming from Argentina's continuing claim to the islands, exploration prospects are enticing. Although much has been made of the remoteness of the area and its comparative lack of infrastructure, the conditions for drilling around the Falklands are infinitely more favourable than the Arctic environment of Northern Alaska, where BP is pumping out vast quantities of oil.

British Gas, which has a large operation in Buenos Aires, has

bad talks with YPF, the Argentine oil company, and others about joint activities in the Falklands. But although the industry has been speculating that British Gas will play a key role - one source suggested it might try to get the whole acreage in conjunction with the Argentinians - the company has tried to cool speculation.

Andrew Gurr, chief executive of the Falkland Islands, said just under 100 top oil companies had been invited to the presentations he is giving tomorrow, which will cover the areas on offer and the legal, taxation and environmental requirements on oil companies.

He expected licensees to form consortiums even among the bigger oil companies. "It's a frontier area," he said. Lasmo, the British oil company, confirmed that it was looking at the possibility, but would only proceed if it found partners.

There is only one oil exploration company in the Falklands, Monarch Exploration, which was set up by Gordon Thompson, an oil consultant in the UK, who raised £100m to which 150 Falkland islanders subscribed. Monarch has a registered office in Stanley but no staff there. Mr Thompson said: "We think a genuine Falkland Islands company will be very attractive to have as a partner." He hopes to link with an exploration company and raise funds to finance Monarch on the back of it.

Although the British Geological Survey has likened the area to the North Sea sedimentary basin, oil companies say before an expensive commitment to exploration is made they will need to be convinced there are also large rock structures capable of containing oil - which does not follow automatically. The area involved is 50 per cent bigger than the North Sea.

A decision to shift resources from an existing exploration area was a big one that had to be backed by strong indications of possible oil-bearing rocks that have yet been made available. However, the presentation is expected to go into more detail.

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# business

TODAY

**Companies**  
Moss Bros, owner of Savoy Taylors Guild, The Suit Company and Cecil Gee, continues to benefit from renewed interest in formal wear. Analysts expect half-time earnings in line with last year's record £1.9m. Interims Ash & Lacy, Brightstone, British Dredging, Chiroscience, Greenacre, Moss Bros, Oasis, Stylo

Finals Anglesey Mining, Betacom, DCS, Groupes Chez Gerard, Melrose Energy, Ricardo

Annual meetings: Ashtead, Europak, IAF, Victoria Carpet. EGMS: Alumasc, Anglo-Eastern Plantations, Ford Ports

**Economics:** Today brings the first statistical picture of how the British economy fared in September. The Purchasing Managers' Index has shown sharp drops in its price component in the past two months. There should be another fall in September. The growth rate of M0, the narrow money measure, will be closely scrutinised after a hint in the

minutes of the late-July monetary meeting that the Chancellor and the Governor of the Bank of England were beginning to become concerned about the rapid expansion in the money supply. The National house price index will be published. Overseas, the National Association of Purchasing Managers Survey brings the first evidence on the US economy in September.

**TOMORROW****Companies**

Profits from Manchester Uni-

**ed** are expected to rise sharply, helped by gains on the sale of players. United will confirm itself as Britain's most profitable football club and its prospects will be helped by the return to competitive play of Eric Cantona who played yesterday for the first time since attacking a fan at Crystal Palace. Half-time profits are expected to approach £20m, from £10.8m last year.

Interims: Arcadian, Biocompables, Bloomsbury Publishing, Ibstock, Middlesex Holdings, Second Market Investment Trust, Silentnight.

Finals: James Halstead, Manchester United, BBB Design, J Saville Gordon.

Annual meetings: None scheduled

EGMs: None scheduled

**Economics**

Figures for whole-world trade in July are likely to confirm the deterioration in Britain's

deficit. The expectation is a deficit of £1.1bn; trade with non-EU countries in July was £87.2m in the red. Bank of England statistics on consumer credit are expected to show a smaller increase in August than the £701m rise in July, partly because of a weather-related drop in retail sales. But the underlying increase is like-

ly to stay strong. The Halifax house price index, used to calculate housing costs in the RPI, is due to be released.

**WEDNESDAY****Companies**

Hewden Stewart, the UK's largest plant-hire company, should show that it is continuing to prosper despite the dismal state of the British construction industry. Pre-tax profits are expected to jump by almost a quarter from £16.2m to £20m. Hewden has benefited from the problems experienced by smaller plant hirers but analysts expect growth to slow in the second half.

Interims: Abtrust European Index, Austin Reed, Bank of Scotland, Blenheim, Global Grampian Holdings, Hewden-Stewart, Hunting, Investment Trust of Jersey, Neill Clark,

J Saville Gordon.

Annual meetings: None scheduled

EGMs: None scheduled

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Prospect Japan Fund, REA, United Industries  
Finlays Burn Stewart Distillers, Magnum Power, Usborne Annual meetings: Duotoo, First Spanish Investment Trust, Peel, Platinum EGMS: Home Counties Newspapers

**Economics**

The IMF releases its annual forecasts for the world economy, as the annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank begin in Washington. US factory orders are likely to have rebounded in August after a fall in July.

Interims: Barry Wehmiller, Brunel, Dentron, Hopkinsons, TH Hughes, Meggit, Schroder Split Fund, Weatum Clothing

Finals: Galliford, McBride

Annual meetings: Allianz AG Holding, Ellis &amp; Everard, Heitron, Pifco, Regent Inns EGMS: None scheduled

**Economics**

Industrial production and manufacturing output figures for August are expected to rise but year-on-year growth is likely to slow further. The puzzle over the divergence between weak official output figures and strong – although slowing – industry surveys has not yet been resolved. The Bundesbank Council meets. No change in key rates is expected.

**FRIDAY****Companies**

Interim figures from Eurotunnel will cast more light on the company's first full year of operation. It will also have the opportunity to give information on its negotiations with banks following the suspension of interest payments on £8bn of debt. Revenues in the first half were £104.5m against a forecast of over £100m for the full year. A loss for the period of up to £350m is expected.

Interims: Barry Wehmiller, Brunel, Dentron, Hopkinsons, TH Hughes, Meggit, Schroder Split Fund, Weatum Clothing

Finals: Waterman Partnership

Annual meetings: East German Investment Trust, PSIT

EGMs: Wickes

**Economics**:

The key US employment report will be the focus of attention, the day ahead of a G7 meeting in Washington. The expectation is the US labour market is losing momentum, so the rise in employment should be much lower than August's increase of 249,000.

NAME	High	Low	Stock	Price	Ctg	Y/M	P/E	Dividends	Index
<b>BANKS, MERCHANT</b>									
Barclays									
Chase Manhattan									
HSBC									
Lloyds									
NatWest									
RBS									
Santander									
Standard Chartered									
UBS									
<b>BANKS, RETAIL</b>									
Barclays									
Chase Manhattan									
HSBC									
Lloyds									
NatWest									
RBS									
Santander									
Standard Chartered									
UBS									
<b>BREWERIES</b>									
Adnams									
Bass									
BrewDog									
Crown Lager									
Fuller									
Grolsch									
Heublein									
Levi									
Marston									
Mild									
Morland									
Pilsner Urquell									
Preston									
Reid									
Ringnes									
Sarsons									
Sheila									
Tetley									
Whitbread									
<b>BUILDING/CONSTRUCTION</b>									
Aldred									
Allied									
Architects									
Barber									
Barker									
Bartley									
Batt									
Batt									
Batt									

age



GAVYN DAVIES

"While the Tories are focused exclusively on how to afford tax cuts, they may be headed straight for a massive electoral backlash centred on the state of the public services."

## Fiscal navel-gazing may leave Labour nest-egg

Gordon Brown's central objective as shadow chancellor has been to shed Labour's image as a profligate party with an addiction to borrowing and debt. To his credit, he has prevented the usual build-up of half-baked spending promises from shadow cabinet colleagues, each of which looks good to individual pressure groups, but taken together repel the electorate. This painstaking effort wins no short-term political spurs, but is essential if the electorate is ever again to entrust Labour with the reins of government.

Most economists have concluded there is no difference between the Labour and Tory fiscal objectives. But this is not necessarily true. Because the Conservative plans are so tight over the medium term, Labour might be able to loosen them a little while still having a credible fiscal framework.

Last year's Budget plans aimed to balance the Budget by 1998-99, and to tighten the underlying fiscal stance every year between now and then. Just because the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement has recently been exceeding the tough target set last year, the public debate (especially on the right of the Tory Party) is missing the fact the Government intends to squeeze public services in real terms by about 1 per cent next year – a phenomenally tight objective.

While the Tories are focused exclusively on how to "afford" tax cuts, they may be heading straight for a massive electoral backlash centred on the state of the public services. The Oxfordshire middle class revolt on the state of the schools might be the first of many outbreaks.

If fully implemented – and admittedly that is a big "if" – these public spending objectives would tighten the fiscal stance much more than Labour's framework would require. Here is the arithmetic: Gordon Brown

reiterated yesterday that Labour's budgetary plans would have two separate objectives. First, over the economic cycle, the government would borrow no more than it was investing, so the "golden rule" of public finance would be fully observed. This, however, would place no upper limit on the PSBR per se. A high level of public investment would automatically justify an increased level of borrowing. So in order to overcome this concern, the shadow chancellor has also said he would seek to stabilise the ratio of public debt/GDP at "a prudent and sensible level". This latter objective would place an upper limit on the PSBR, probably at an average of about 2.5 per cent of GDP (£20bn) in the course of the cycle.

By coincidence, this PSBR objective is almost equal to what the Conservatives have achieved in the past decade, a fact that has encouraged the conclusion that the fiscal stance would not change much under Labour. But it is the future that matters. The key question is how the path for the PSBR on unchanged policies might compare with Labour's objectives. Table 1 makes this

comparison. On present economic policies the PSBR would most likely drop from 2.7% this year to 1.8% in 1996-97, and then down to zero by the end of the century. This path assumes the Government maintains its objective of holding the growth in public spending to 1 per cent per annum in real terms, while the economy as a whole grows at about 2.75 per cent per annum. Although this may look draconian, it would in fact involve a slower reduction in borrowing than was planned by Kenneth Clarke last year. Consequently, if he chooses to stick to last year's targets (which is unlikely), he would need to raise an extra £5bn a year in the November Budget.

Labour, by contrast, would not seem to face the same dilemma. It would aim not for a budget surplus, but for a PSBR of 2.5 per cent of GDP when the economy is next at mid-cycle (i.e. when GDP is at trend). The question is exactly when this will be. The economy was last at trend in 1990; if we simply extrapolate the GDP trend line from that date onwards at the economy's long-term growth rate of 2.2 per cent per annum, we find that

GDP is unlikely to return to trend until 1998-99 at the earliest. So if Labour aims for a PSBR target of 2.5 per cent of GDP in that year, it could borrow about £16bn more than present plans imply.

This might look too good to be true, and there are several ways in which this margin could shrink. First, an incoming Labour chancellor might decide that an easing in the underlying fiscal stance would be inappropriate for demand-management reasons. Table 2 shows what would happen if the next government left the underlying fiscal stance unchanged up to 1998-99, eliminating the large fiscal tightening planned by the Treasury. The PSBR target would need to be £15bn in 1998-99, instead of the £20bn suggested by the golden rule and public debt requirements. This would cut Labour's scope for fiscal action from £16bn to £1bn.

Second, the next chancellor might decide it is imprudent to assume GDP will be at trend only in 1998-99. There is some evidence the trend rate of growth in GDP may not have been as high as the usual 2.2 per cent per annum since 1990, because of a period of low

growth in the labour force and chronic under-investment. Just to be on the safe side, it might be wise to assume that trend GDP will be attained earlier than 1998-99. But for each year we bring the crucial date forward, Labour's scope for fiscal manoeuvre is cut by about £5bn.

Third, the plans bequeathed from the previous government would of course be nothing more than figures written on pieces of paper – the intended tough control over public spending is just a promise. If Labour could not deliver the same tight control over the public sector as promised by the Tories (especially on public sector pay), the entire scope for fiscal action could be absorbed by spending overshoots.

Finally, of course, Mr Clarke may not be too keen on leaving a nice little nest egg for Mr Brown to spend. He may start to loosen the reins on public spending, or pre-announce a phased programme of tax cuts for the medium term, which would eliminate all of Labour's scope – and indeed leave Labour in serious difficulty with the PSBR if the economy should hit an early recession.

At the moment, though, the Chancellor does not seem to be thinking in these terms. Instead, he seems determined to play the card of fiscal stringency, and is presumably ready to argue borrowing is being reduced too far. That may well be laudable from an economic point of view. But once Mr Clarke has set his budget targets for public spending in 1996-97, it will be difficult under the new control system subsequently to relax them. This looming crisis about the provision of public services should be the real focus of attention, not endless navel-gazing about the prospect of achieving modest tax cuts in November.

## Scope for fiscal relaxation

	(£bn)	PSBR on unchanged policy	PSBR target Conservative Labour	Fiscal room Conservative Labour
1995/96	2.6	21.5	5.1	16.4
1996/97	1.7	13.0	4.9	8.1
1997/98	1.0	5.0	2.1	2.9
1998/99	4.7	1.0	21.0	5.7
1999/2000	4.7	9.0	22.4	15.3

\*PSBR target in 1994 Budget. Assumes the PSBR should be 2.5% of GDP when the economy is apparently working at normal capacity.

## PSBR projections on "neutral" fiscal policy

	(£bn)	PSBR on neutral fiscal policy	Planned fiscal tightening (cumulative)	% of GDP
1995/96	2.6	21.5	3.6	0.5
1996/97	1.7	10.3	8.8	1.1
1997/98	1.0	15.4	10.7	1.3
1998/99	4.7	11.3	16.0	1.8
1999/2000	4.7			

\*Neutral policy in the years after 1995/96 is defined to include 2.2% per real growth in the public spending constraint to be in line with trend GDP, and unchanged tax rates

Source: Goldman Sachs

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GOODW

## New chapter opens as Tory values brought to books

The collapse of the price-fixing system is creating a new world in publishing. The chairman of Random House ponders the future

year. Over a three-year period she slashed output from 1,800 titles to about 1,200 annually, allowing the sales force to focus its attention.

"We were able to spend more on everything, and we weren't spreading ourselves too thin," she said in a rare, face-to-face interview with the *Independent* late last week.

Atop the ugly Random House fortress in London's un-fashionable Vauxhall Bridge Road, Ms Rebuck's office is oddly comfortable: a deep sofa lines one wall, across from a coffee table groaning with books – Random House books, of course. Perched on one pile is

a copy of Salman Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh*, the bookies' favourite to win this year's prestigious Booker Prize. Next to it lies a copy of *Enigma*, the oew thriller by Robert Harris, whom Random House nurtured from

ularly of a personal nature. But she is quick to smile, and highly intelligent about the industry she has made her own.

"I am running a business," she says. The old battle between the traditional small publisher

and the giant multinational is chimerical, she maintains. "Authors want the intimacy of a small unit, where everyone knows them. When it comes to sales, they want a machine," she says.

and the giant multinational is chimerical, she maintains. "Authors want the intimacy of a small unit, where everyone knows them. When it comes to sales, they want a machine," she says.

By running Random House's 32 imprints – Jonathan Cape, Chatto & Windus, Century – on an independent basis, and by centralising the sales force, authors get the best of both worlds.

Until very recently, the NBA ensured that the book publishing environment was also quite stable. "A workable NBA worked very well indeed for many years," she says. "But an unworkable NBA, which is the situation we found ourselves in, didn't work at all. The situation had come to a head, and we had to recognise that the market had changed."

The proximate cause of the

agreement's collapse can be found among Britain's book retailers. Allowed to discount titles published by companies outside the NBA – Reed, since 1991, Hodder Headline since late 1994, and even the BBC children's book range, since mid-September – the big retailers found they could attract additional custom by aggressive pricing.

The trend was confirmed by the deep discounting by supermarkets such as Asda and Tesco, which stocked popular books only and sold them at half price.

"Many of our customers wanted to start trading on a non-Net basis," Ms Rebuck says. "Authors asked us why their titles weren't discounted and others were. We just couldn't sustain this half-way house."

Bot a unilateral withdrawal was not the preferred route for Random House, she insists. "We would have preferred an industry consensus and an orderly withdrawal towards the end of the year."

So why did she move only two days before a meeting sponsored by the NBA administrator, the Publishers Association, to discuss the agreement's future? "We could see there was no consensus forthcoming," Ms Rebuck says. "A number of

publishers felt there was increasing pressure and that it was inevitable it was going to disintegrate. But they didn't want that, so they weren't going to do anything about it. We felt we had to take decisive action."

Her decision was made easier by WH Smith, the industry's largest customer, which told publishers it was preparing a massive promotional campaign at both Smith and at its high-street chain, Waterstone's.

A number of customers had come to us with what-if scenarios and contingency plans. The difference with the Smith-Waterstone's approach was the immediacy of it and the fact they had worked it out in such a lot of detail."

The chief worry of publishers such as Random House is the prospect of a debilitating price war. The supermarkets have already declared they will remain the low-cost sellers of popular books. High street shops are likely to counter with special offers of their own – for example, cut-rate prices for this year's Booker titles, as well as special rates for bulk purchases.

The battle will mean great bargains at Christmas. But Ms Rebuck is concerned about the longer term, particularly the fate of independent bookshops. "We need to ensure quality, diversi-

ty and accessibility," she says. "We must encourage independents to be resourceful, imaginative and entrepreneurial so they can compete with the bigger chains."

Random House is offering a "flexible" package to independents to encourage them to offer deals to their customers. "Flexibility" probably means lower wholesale prices for Random House books, but Ms Rebuck refuses to provide further details. The publisher is also believed to be campaigning for "firm" sales of books, rather than the current system under which retailers can return unsold stock for credit.

She predicts some failures in the independent sector ("re-grettable") but believes the future of the book business remains bright. She dismisses the idea that new authors will have difficulty getting published, or that best-sellers will push aside more worthy titles.

Booksellers, however, will have to learn to market more effectively, providing more attractive sites, a wider range of services (coffee shops, CD-Roms for children to play), and personalised services.

"It is a steep learning curve," she concedes. "But I am convinced that price alone is not going to sell books."

Matthew Horsman



Gail Rebuck: A workable Net Book Agreement worked well, but an unworkable NBA did not work at all

## Wall Street cashes in on merger mania

Bear Stearns's chairman, Allen Greenberg, last week gave a little reminder of the misery that was Wall Street just a few months ago. In the financial year that ended 30 June, the firm suffered a 38 per cent fall in its net income, and whereas Mr Greenberg's bonus a year before was a handsome \$10.9m (£6.8m), this time it slumped to \$5.6m. Still a lot of money, but a big cut none the less.

So the shadow of 1994, when virtually everyone was laying off workers by the thousands and bond trading suffered its worst spell in 20 years, still lingers a little. But almost every other item of news coming from the Street these days tells us that the sunlight has started to return. Even Salomon, beset both by losses and an exodus of its top performers, might just have managed a profit in the quarter just ended. (They will tell us in the third week of the month.) Then we will know for sure that the wheel has turned.

And why shouldn't things be better? While rising interest rates spoiled the party in 1994, this year the rates scenario

VIEW FROM  
NEW YORK

is basically stable but on a downward trend – has been near perfect. Over-the-counter securities trading is booming, while investors continue to pour their money into US mutual funds at a record pace. And that's before considering the avalanche of merger and acquisition activity, led by the takeover bids for Capital Cities-ABC by Walt Disney, for CBS by Westinghouse, and most recently, for Turner Broadcasting by Time Warner. Merger mania in the media industry is almost being matched by the banking sector, with fusions by the handful, including that between Chase Manhattan and Chemical Bank.

Indeed, according to a study published on Friday by *Mergers & Acquisitions*, a publication of the Los Angeles investment bank Houlihan Lokey Howard & Zukin, 1995 is set to become America's biggest takeover year in history. The third quarter alone produced deals worth a record \$125.2bn, up 55 per cent over the same quarter in 1994. So far this year the number of deals valued at \$1bn or more is up 65 per cent, while the

number of smaller combinations has also risen sharply.

Wall Street is enjoying the ride. Notable beneficiaries include CS First Boston, Goldman Sachs and above all, Morgan Stanley, which acted as adviser both in the Chemical-Chase deal and in Time Warner's \$7.5bn embrace of Turner.

In addition to the improved conditions, many firms are benefiting from their efforts last year to cut costs, including the multiple redundancies. "The lay-offs have worked and are beginning to show through in the financials," says Michael Lipper, of Lipper Analytical in New York. He confirms that Wall Street is thriving again but voices caution. "I would say it is a good time, but not yet a boom time. There is still some pricing pressure and some excess capacity." So far there has been no sign of significant returing of any of the thousands who got their pink slips last winter.

And while little change seems likely on rates in the near future, the months ahead may hold some other uncertainties. Mr Lipper is concerned, for example, that the onset of the presidential campaign may bring some of the trading volumes

down as investors and corporations consider what kind of policy changes various candidates might bring. "It is possible that as we begin to see the candidates we may become like deer in the headlights. It is a wonderful excuse to do nothing," he says.

Finally, there are others, aside from the investment bankers, who are making money in the merger binge. As the gossip from the Time Warner courtship of Turner surfaces, we learn, for example, that one other than Michael Milken, the ex-convict who, in theory, is banned from any securities-related businesses, is reportedly being paid a \$50m fee by his friend Ted Turner for advice rendered. Theo there is the package that has been promised to Mr Turner himself, who, if the deal goes through, will become a vice president of Time Warner. His pay packet, according to the *New York Times*, has been set at over \$110m for the first five years – or somewhere around \$42 a minute. Eat your heart out, Mr Greenberg.

David Usborne

## Manweb

## Shareholder information update

## Manweb's response to ScottishPower's final offer

To hear your Board's advice call

0800 55 66 22  
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or

0800 55 66 33  
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go!

RUGBY UNION: England's captain puts on a virtuoso performance but one of his leading lieutenants faces a court martial

## Richards sets a poor example

**I**t was a desperate day for at least one England player, possibly two, and neither of them was Will Carling. Dean Richards now has a date with the Leicestershire Rugby Union disciplinary panel and may well in consequence find himself forcibly removed from the England squad, an eventuality that nowadays can have serious financial implications.

Richards was in trouble while Leicester were beating Gloucester by a flattering conclusion 27-14 at Kingsholm. They were gratified to have recovered so soon from their defeat by Bath but more especially because in league rugby this has been one of the Tigers' least productive hunting grounds. There, however, the gratification ended.

The Leicester captain, late-

ly leading by bad example, re-

ceived a yellow card for foul play for the second week running.

The incidents that led to this

punishment for Richards and,

separately, Martin Johnson

symbolised a periodically un-

pleasant affair and, in that

many others were involved,

they were ill-fated to be singled

out.

Richards will have to defend,

or at any rate explain, his con-

duct before his local discipli-

narians and Tony Russ,

Leicester's director of rugby, re-

alises his England No 8 will

probably be suspended, though

no date has yet been fixed for

the hearing. Richards's next

England engagement is to-

morrow's training session at

Marlow.

How embarrassing for him:

two yellows, even in different

games, now amounts cumula-

tively to a red. "This is a test

case," Alan Wells, the Leices-

tershire RU secretary, said yes-

terday. "There are no

precedents or any procedure

laid down, so potentially it's a

minefield." Evidently, it is a

problem he would rather not

have.

Not that Russ - however

much he may express disap-

proval of forward anarchy -

would accept that Brian Camp-

sall, or Tony Rowlands, the

Leicester director of rugby, re-

alises his England No 8 will

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Last time it was stamping:

this time Richards was done

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an all-in punch-up, a touch

judge suggesting to Campsall

that Richards had been the

instigator.

## Reid and Weston heed rallying cry

BILL LEITH

Boroughmuir 21

Watsonians 21

Alastair McHarg, the coach of the Exiles, may have picked the wrong week to suggest that his side should pull out of the inter-district championship in protest at a schedule of three games in eight days. The mood in Scotland appears distinctly anti-English as the spectre of Newcastle Gosforth poaching players provokes fears that Scottish rugby could soon resemble Irish football, with stars only returning home for internationals.

Jim Telfer, Scotland's director of rugby, has urged club players to remain loyal and be more ambitious in the face of an influx of overseas players.

Among those who have risen



STEVE BALE  
COMMENTARY

For Leicestershire it was a case of retaliation or, put another way, helping a mate - neither of which would amount to any defence at a disciplinary hearing. Still, Russ intends to try, based on the contention that Neil Back was being raked and need-

ed help.

Mind you, there would be something wrong if Gloucester, with ball-winners of the calibre of Dave Sims and Richard West, did not find the line-out a profitable source of supply and they caused Leicester - in particular Johnson - infinitely more inconvenience than Bath had.

Indeed if Martin Kimber had kicked the points that were available Gloucester would have had a decent half-time lead instead of turning round at 6-6. As it turned out, the chance had been lost and, besides, Leicester invariably looked the more dangerous on those precious occasions when opportunities occurred.

"We will defend him in every way we can," Russ said. "We want to show some video to try to show he was merely defending one of his own. When you have a mass brawl like that and one bloke is picked out it's pretty indefensible. When one of your own is being attacked you defend him, end of story."

One imagines Twickenham taking a dim view of Russ's spirited defence of foul play provided it has first been provoked, and if the powers-that-be wanted first-hand evidence they could ask their own technical director, Don Rutherford, who was present.

Yet as a Gloucester old boy, Rutherford was more concerned about giving the benefit of his wisdom to Richard Hill, the club's new coaching director, and as soon as the game was finished he handed over three pages of well-meaning analytic advice. Right now Hill, England's 1991 World Cup scrum-half and more recently resigned as Bath's chairman of selectors, may feel he can use all the help he can get.

In the interests of learning to walk before trying to run, he intends adopting a step-by-step approach, the problem being that by the time he has taken all the necessary steps Gloucester might find they have lost an awful lot of ground. So for now Hill has to hope that others (Orrell and Saracens, preferably) struggle as Gloucester are, and if the Cherry-and-Whites can pick off Orrell next week, well, and good.

Last week, his first with the club, Hill concentrated on the line-out and by Saturday had wrought a significant improvement. That was step one. Now that possession is being won, it is up to him to proceed to step

two and find a means of using it.

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## sport

**FOOTBALL:** Celtic on receiving end of an Englishman making giant strides on the comeback trail as Gullit wins the good fight

# Gascoigne fits the Rangers bill



GLENN MOORE  
COMMENTARY

**H**e did not play the flute but, when it mattered in Saturday's Old Firm derby, Paul Gascoigne called the tune. In doing so the 28-year-old Englishman all but confirmed that, come May, his talent will finally reap a championship medal.

It also pointed at possibilities for the following month's European Championship. While Gascoigne flickered in and out of the match he demonstrated his growing fitness with the second of Rangers' goals in their 2-0 win at Celtic Park.

It followed a sick move, and was coolly taken, but the most impressive aspect was the 70-yard box-to-box run Gascoigne made to achieve it, passing eight players on the way. Equally significant was his role at this stage, an advanced midfield position where he may yet play for England.

Such a development would be a shrewd move. Gascoigne is as dangerous on the edge of his own penalty area as he is around his opponents' and the more chances he gets to concentrate on his dribbling, rather than his tackling, the better.

If the former helped open up Celtic for Rangers' first goal, the latter almost saw him off the pitch. Gascoigne failed to time any of his first four tackles and was finally booked, for swiving Jim Collins across the shins, after half an hour.

He was also the victim of some wild challenges. Pierre van Hooijdonk was very lucky to escape a caution after a crude over-the-top tackle narrowly missed Gascoigne's much-scarred legs. Gascoigne exploded with rage but the impressive referee, John Rowbotham, stepped between them in time.

Even so, at half-time Richard Gough was concerned enough to tell Gascoigne: "Make sure you stay on the pitch." The Rangers captain added: "I told him 'If you get sent off you will be letting your team-mates

bought out the Kelly-White dynasty in March 1994, has since invested (or raised) £25m.

The hulk of that has gone on a massive new stand which seats 27,000 and towers above the grim housing estates around it. The rest has gone on the team, enabling Tommy Burns to buy the sort of players that were out of reach of his predecessors.

While they imported Englishmen of dubious quality and average Scots, Burns has bought Andreas Thom, a German international striker, and several of the better Scottish players: Tosh McKinlay, John Hughes and Simon O'Donnell.

A share issue has given supporters a sense of involvement in the club and crowds, which had dipped to under 10,000, are rapidly rising - season tickets are up from 7,000 to 26,000 with a waiting list. They have also won their first trophy for six years - last season's Scottish Cup - and survived into the second round in Europe. However, Saturday showed that the gap between them and Rangers remains vast. Celtic dominated the first half without ever looking like scoring, only to concede a goal a minute before the break.

After Gascoigne had engineered a rare break-out the ball came to Oleg Salenko, who beat two players before crossing for the unmarked Alec Leishman to head in.

Twelve minutes after the break, with Celtic again pressing, Alan McLaren cleared to McCoist who fed Salenko, who beat two players before crossing for the unmarked Alec Leishman to head in.

It was a disappointing afternoon for those green hordes but, if the result suggested that the Scottish title will again remain in Glasgow's West End, there were signs of hope for the hoops as well. Though Celtic's team, like its ground, is only half-built the club's fortunes are in the ascendant. Paradise is no longer troubled, just impatient.

The club's recent history mirrors Manchester City's. Supporters, disillusioned by their failure to match successful local rivals, agitate successfully to overthrow the board. In come a millionaire chairman, a new manager, and the hounds.

However, this is where the tides diverge. While City have gone from poor to mediocre, Gascoigne's much-scarred legs, Gascoigne exploded with rage but the impressive referee, John Rowbotham, stepped between them in time.

Even so, at half-time Richard Gough was concerned enough to tell Gascoigne: "Make sure you stay on the pitch." The Rangers captain added: "I told him 'If you get sent off you will be letting your team-mates

down'. He is an experienced player and you should not have to tell him, but these games do wind you up. There was a lot of niggling going on and he was a target - not that I blame them. I would try and wind him up if I was playing him."

Not exactly encouraging words for the big games ahead but, given Gascoigne's impulsive and passionate nature, a Glasgow derby was always likely to push him to the edge. After his goal he exulted with the 3,000 Rangers fans as if he was among them. Then he jogged back, sonorously patting his belly as he passed the Celtic support who had been chanting "Who ate all the pies?" at him.

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Turning point: Celtic fans watch anxiously as Paul Gascoigne (left) gets the better of John Collins. Photograph: Drew Farrell

## Little comparison for Atkinson to ponder

PHIL SHAW

Coventry City  
Aston Villa

0

Though the combatants came from nine countries spread over five continents, just 20 miles of motorway separate Coventry and Villa. In more ways than one, events at Highfield Road landed Ron Atkinson with a Little local difficulty.

There is no malice between Atkinson and his successor as Villa manager, Brian Little. Yet the parochial nature of football fans, particularly in an urban sprawl like the West Midlands, means they can hardly avoid comparisons. Before Saturday, the jury was still out on who benefited most from last season's upheavals. Now the case for Coventry is not looking good.

Consider the evidence. When Little stepped into Atkinson's shoes last November, Villa were 19th in the Premiership. After a turnover of 16 players, which left them 7.6m down, they have risen so far so fast that they run the risk of nosebleeds.

In contrast, Atkinson found Coventry in 17th spot. Football's eternal, but seven months on, after running up an unprecedented transfer deficit of £5m, they are 16th in a division two clubs smaller.

Otherwise none of Villa's principal contributors are available to Terry Venables. Mark Bosnich, who has kept five clean sheets in as many meetings with Coventry, made some staggering saves to win the battle of the Australian keepers. Savo Milosevic and Yorke, the planet's only Serbo-Tobagan strikeforce, did what was required in front of goal, while in midfield Andy Townsend embodied their crucial advantage in sheer power.

Not that Villa should be characterised as prosaic, a stigma that attached itself to Little because of Leicester's lumpen approach in the latter part of their promotion campaign under him. Some of their moves here, notably the flurry of first-time touches that set up a disallowed goal by Milosevic, were as seductive as Manchester United in full flow.

Draper, alternating between economy and expansiveness with a verve befitting one whose heroes played for Brian Clough's Forest and Jimi

Hendrix, deserves to be in the England squad to be named today. In the event of Paul Gascoigne crying off, or going in for a re-tint, he would be worth looking at in Norway.

Little suggested that a three-goal margin cannot, in the final analysis, flatter a team. At a later press conference, which made one wish that managers were obliged to argue the toss together, Atkinson volunteered the opposite verdict. To neutral eyes, Villa never looked fully in control until the closing minutes.

Coventry, explosively served in attack by Peter Ndlovu, are too lightweight to be as cavalier as they were. It was symptomatic of their over-eagerness to go at Villa that even as the visitors kicked off, the left wing-back, Marcus Hall, left a huge gap behind him. Mark Draper exploited the aberration with a long pass to Ian Taylor, whose cross was headed in by Dwight Yorke with 12 seconds gone.

Draper, alternating between economy and expansiveness with a verve befitting one whose heroes played for Brian Clough's Forest and Jimi

Little may have a clear edge over Atkinson in results, but as long as Coventry keep Ndlovu they will have a striker with the pace and panache their neighbours need to maintain their bright start.

David Pleat (3-0-1; Milosevic (0-2); Milosavljevic (0-3)

Coventry City (3-5-2; Flory; Bowes, Buss, Williams; Polster; Stratton, 74); Toffs; Roderick; Ndlovu; Hall; Collins; Van Herwijk, Renshaw (3-3-2); Gomes; Wright, Gough, Patric, McLaren, Colclough; McCall, Gascoigne, Ferguson; Salenko; Miller; 78); McCoist, Hendon, 79; Substitutes not used: Murray, Thompson (64), Hendon, 79; Referee: Tony Doherty (Greater Manchester).

Referee: A White (Cheshire).

Attendance: 30,000.

Referee: G Poll (Ring).

# FOOTBALL: Everton overwhelmed as Forest silence Ball's City

## Ferdinand puts on class act

GUY HODGSON

Everton  
Newcastle United1  
3

It is the measure of the brouhaha surrounding Eric Cantona that the League leaders playing the FA Cup holders could be relegated to a warm-up act. No matter, Newcastle United may have taken second best yesterday but they reinforced their first place in the Premiership.

Goals from Les Ferdinand, Robert Lee and Paul Kinsella ensured that even Old Trafford's *enfant terrible* could not entirely obliterate Newcastle from the attention. Indeed there was plenty to suggest that Manchester United, along with the other championship contenders, will find that a recurring problem.

Certainly Everton could not live with them yesterday. Last season the Merseysiders defeated Newcastle twice at Goodison but, apart from a 90-second spell early in the first half when they could have scored three times, they were inferior. Even their goal, scored by Anders Limpar, had consolation (not to mention offside) stamped right through it.

"They are a terrific side," Joe Royle, the Everton manager, said, "and if they maintain that form, particularly away from home, they have every chance of winning the title. Ferdinand is the difference. He not only scores but wins everything with the ball."

Everton's chance to win their first League match in four outings came and went in the eighth and ninth minutes. Tony Grant hit the bar with a chip and Paul Rideout forced Shaka Hislop to tip a fierce drive over but the opportunity that will linger in Royle's nightmares was the free header that Dave Watson had from the resulting corner. He rose on his own but headed over from six yards.

The price for such profligacy became apparent within two minutes. Ferdinand, who gave a colossal performance, collected the ball 40 yards out, swept past Dave Watson and with a low shot from 20 yards as David Unsworth and Earl Barrett backed away.

That was Ferdinand's 100th goal of his career and after 25 minutes he should have made it 101 when David Ginola, filling Peter Beardsley's giv-and-take role, set him free. He was 100 yards from goal but missed. Ginola chipped down a loose ball and as he advanced into the area he was bundled over by a combination of Unsworth and Barrett. Lee sent Southall the wrong way with the penalty.

When Kinsella made it 3-0, bundling in Warren Barton's cross after 59 minutes, the situation seemed ripe for the rout of Everton but as Newcastle relaxed, Black began to gain parity with black and white and with nine minutes remaining Limpar scored after first shot against Hislop.

"We looked like a team that believes we can win things," Kevin Keegan, the Newcastle manager, said. "Last year we looked like a team that never thought we would."

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**LAMMTARRA**

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**SCHUMACHER**

In sight of world title after stunning victory in Germany

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FOR TWO TO BUYSecrets  
the MI  
who he  
lobby is**THE PRODIGAL RETURNS:** The Frenchman has the first and final words but in between two-goal Fowler grabs the limelight

# Cantona refuses to be upstaged

GLENN MOORE

Manchester United

## Evans disappointed as points are shared

In the end it was neither fish nor foul – nor sardine, nor seagull, as the man himself might have put it. Eric Cantona made a goal and scored a goal but his welcome home party ended in anti-climax.

Though the points were shared Liverpool were the moral victors, while Newcastle will have been as pleased as anybody. They are now four points clear at the top of the Premiership, Manchester United remain third and Liverpool are fourth. September is barely out and already the contenders are massing.

There will be battles royal ahead but, yesterday, the attention was on a republican. There were enough tricolours about to celebrate Bastille Day and, 68 seconds into the match, they were being waved across the pitch when United took the lead.

Inevitably it was Cantona who was at the core. Despite all the attention he found space on the left and Andy Cole found him. His cross reached Nicky Butt who went past Phil Babb with his first touch and scored with his second.

For a few minutes Liverpool looked lost. A hamstring injury to Mark Wright meant John Scales had been pitched in for his first game of the season while Jason McAleer was making his full League debut for the club. However, slowly their passing began to gel and United were forced so far back that Ryan Giggs became an auxiliary left-back.

The equaliser should have come after 22 minutes but Ian Rush, who had a quiet game, just failed to reach a clever chip by Fowler. Four minutes later came the penalty appeal. Fowler, though, was not to be denied and six minutes later he again came in from the left and drilled a ball inside Peter Schmeichel's near post as the goalkeeper anticipated a cross.

The knee injury that caused Manchester United's Denis Irwin to miss yesterday's match has forced his withdrawal from the Republic of Ireland squad for next week's game against Latvia. More football, pages 26 and 27

but it fell to his wrong foot and he shot tamely at David James.

At half-time Alex Ferguson, the United manager, gamely Butt, suffering from a groin strain, came off. David Beckham came on and the team reverted to a three-man central defence, aping Liverpool. The only other time it was tried this season, at Aston Villa on the opening day, it was abandoned after shipping three goals in 37 minutes.

Eight minutes later it looked as if a repeat performance was looming. Gary Neville was caught on his own and brushed aside by Fowler who delicately chipped Schmeichel to put Liverpool ahead. United pushed up but Liverpool remained in control.

Then calamity befell Michael Thomas. Having come in for John Barnes – missing for domestic reasons – he had provided the midfield with bite and Fowler with the pass for his second goal. But now he dithered in possession, was tackled by Philip Neville and the ball broke to Cantona. He fed Giggs who tumbled under Redknapp's challenge. Cantona coolly dispatched the penalty.

Though Cole, with an acrobatic overhead kick, and Redknapp, with a free-kick, went close Cantona had had the final say. This time everyone knew what he meant. He was back.

**Manchester United (4-3-3):** Schmeichel; P. Schmeichel (72), Bruce, Neville, Neville Butt (Beckham, 45), Scales, Cole, Cole, Giggs. Substitutes not used: Parkes, Liverpool (2-5-2); **James Scales, Ruddock, Babb, McAllister, McManaman, Thomas, Redknapp, Hartson, Rimmer, Pearce, Barnes not used; Whiteman (64), Kennedy, Calvynson.**

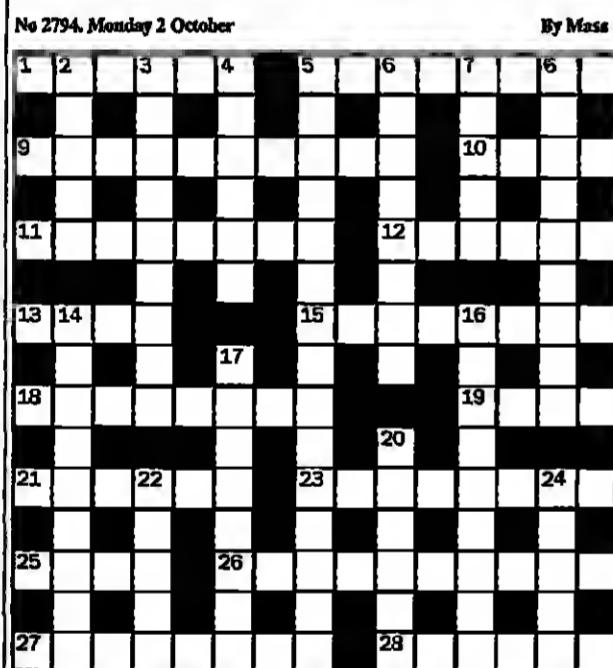
Referee: D Gray (Mersey).

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Pole position: Eric Cantona climbs the goal support after scoring on his return yesterday – Photograph: Peter Jay

## THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD



By Mass

**ACROSS**

- Organ's reprinted protests... (6)
- Typical of eccentric (8)
- "My Time in Grave" is weird (10)
- Very little charge (4)
- Silver he found in strike, leaving mining refuse (4,4)
- French article, say, damaged on edge (6)
- Gear one secured for reversing (4)
- Finished, look — with commercial handicap (8)
- We're told to observe rough for marine creature (8)

**DOWN**

- Like princes of Troy, almost (5)
- Car diagram and signature (9)
- Cycles, discovering spots around Rhode Island (6)
- City racket, hoodlum's first (4)
- Hidden talent brought into play (6)
- A viewer's complaint? (8)
- Plant pots (4)
- One involved in many a draw? (10)
- Take back dog right away (8)
- Is first in Marlborough after school break (6)
- Suppresses hooch makers (6)
- Compete for record (5)
- Seamen making voyage, reportedly (5)
- Watch faces light up with this! (15)
- Cuts some capers in theatrical garb? (8)
- Here's one in the soup! (5)
- Another reading of one's hand, perhaps? (9)
- Effective worker (9)
- Bar thinly eroded in network (9)
- A patronised female? (8)
- Suppresses hooch makers (6)
- Compete for record (5)
- Seamen making voyage, reportedly (5)

**Rugby Union**

STEVE BALE

One hundred years and one month after rugby league made its own break for freedom, rugby union's International Board yesterday made the historic announcement of an immediate free gangway for rugby league players, hitherto barred as professionals and parishes, to enter or re-enter union.

The return of players of the outstanding quality of the Welsh stand-off Jonathan Davies is now dependent only on the contractual arrangements they have in league. Note Davies's nationality: the IRB, meeting in Tokyo to ratify the demise of amateurism agreed in Paris in August, gave individual unions the let-out of regulating the gangway as they each saw fit.

And already the Rugby

Football Union has made clear its desire to enforce a stand-down period for would-be converts in England – even though its own president admits such a restriction would contravene the law relating to restraint of trade.

The Welsh, by contrast, know when they are on to a good thing and when Vernon Pugh, chairman of the IRB amateurism committee and the Welsh Rugby Union, arrived at Heathrow airport last night he had no doubt his union would welcome any and all of its northern exiles.

"We haven't discussed it but I would be surprised if we decided on any restriction," he said.

Pugh is the driving force behind the abandonment of years of stamotism and the embracing of professionalism under the catch-all description of "open" rugby. Once the decision to permit payment for playing had been taken in

principle, the century-old ban on rugby league professionals was no longer tenable.

So is the English position and, bizarrely, the RFU appears to know it. "We would still favour a period of stand-down or re-qualification," Bill Bishop, the union's president, said yesterday. England's delegates in Tokyo had pushed for a six-month stand-down.

"We have varying points of view and Rugby Union officials in Cumbria, Yorkshire and Lancashire feel very strongly about the effects of player-loss to RL. We will be discussing the matter at our executive committee next week aware that, if we imposed a period of suspension and it were tested in the courts, we would lose."

"But we do have a four-month qualification spell for players moving from one club to another and a six-month spell for clubs, for instance, will need the approval of their national union."

Richards' poor example, Carling's sidestep, page 25

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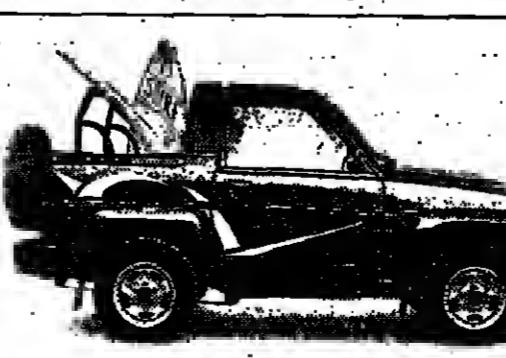
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